English Literature: Victorians and Moderns

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Contents

Part VII. Henry James (1843–1916)

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Preface

This open textbook was originally planned as a stand-alone anthology for various one-semester second-year Modern English Literature courses in the British Columbia colleges and universities system, but it can also be used elsewhere and at other levels, or as a supplementary text for the Victorians and Moderns portions of British literature survey courses. Besides its portability, searchability, and compatibility with smart phones, tablets, e-readers, and laptop or desktop computers, students should welcome its free availability online anywhere in the world, providing instant access to a variety of enriching photographic, audio, and video resources via the Internet. Another key feature is the series of six appendices, containing three mini-casebooks, a glossary of literary terms, and practical guides to writing literary essays and documenting them in correct MLA format. These "controlled" research casebooks and guides should be particularly helpful to students without easy access to the resources of large academic libraries. Its defects are wholly the responsibility of the editor. In the explanatory apparatus, he has tried to avoid the faults attributed by Aldous Huxley to certain editors, whom he chides for fulsomely explaining and discussing "the obvious points" while passing over "the hard passages, about which one might want to know something,…in the silence of sheer ignorance" (*Limbo* 197).

Such a project would not have been possible without those whose labours have resulted in the invaluable Internet digital libraries and resources such as Archive.org, Professor George Landow's The Victorian Web, Oxford University's First World War Poetry Digital Archive, the Poets.org site of the American Academy of Poets, various BBC and British Library educational sites, *Wikimedia Commons* and its sister sites, as well as numerous other helpful public Internet sites maintained by universities and individuals.

James Sexton

Vancouver, September 12, 2014

I

The Victorian Era 1832–1901

1.

Introduction

Although Queen Victoria did not ascend to the throne until 1837, it is common to refer to the Victorian era as beginning in 1832, the year of both the First Reform Bill and the death of Sir Walter Scott, a major writer of the Romantic era. The main topics for this unit on the Victorians are **Industrialism**, **Religious Doubt**, **The Role of Women** ("The Woman Question") and **Imperialism.** This is not to say that these issues were peculiar to that era; indeed, we will see them reappearing in later units; for example, the "Woman Question" in the Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield chapters, Industrialism in Shaw's play *Major Barbara* and in Huxley's *Brave New World*, and Imperialism and Religious Doubt in the Orwell and Eliot chapters respectively.

As one critic puts it, the following developments characterize the Victorian era:

- A decisive shift of population and political and economic power from the country estates to the cities and the consequent increasing dominance of the middle classes
- Industrialization and the "proletarianization" of the working class
- The laissez-faire school of economics, along with the countervailing current of social reform movements and the emergence of Marxian socialism
- The dramatic expansion of English naval and trade dominance and the extension of the British Empire around the globe
- The exposition of the theory of evolution by Darwin and his defenders and the heightened conflict between science and religion (Adapted from George Scheper *A Survey of English Literature*. Maryland Center for Public Broadcasting 1973).

Resources

Industrialism

- Victorian Technology
- "1832 Reform Act." Taking Liberties: The Struggle for Britain's Freedoms and Rights. The British Library.
- "The 1833 Factory Act." *The Victorian Web*. Dr. Marjie Bloy, National University of Singapore.

- “Child Labor.” *The Victorian Web*. David Cody, Hartwick College.
- “The Crystal Palace, or The Great Exhibition of 1851: An Overview.” *The Victorian Web*.
- “Great Exhibition.” Treasures. *The National Archives*.
- “The Life of the Industrial Worker in Nineteenth-Century England.” *The Victorian Web*. Laura Del Col, West Virginia University.
- “Social Darwinism.”
- “The Reform Acts.” *The Victorian Web*. Glenn Everett, University of Tennessee at Martin.
- “Uberindustrialism”

Religious Doubt

- “Victorian Science & Religion.” *The Victorian Web*. Aileen Fyfe, National University of Ireland Galway and John van Wyhe, Cambridge University.
- “Victorian Geology.” *The Victorian Web*. John van Wyhe, Cambridge University.
- “Dover Beach”, Matthew Arnold. *The Victorian Web*. [With commentary].

Women’s Rights

- “The Woman Question”: Overview Norton Online
- “The Nature of Women.”
- “The 1870 Education Act.” Living Heritage: Going to School. *www.parliament.uk*.
- “Gender Ideology & Separate Spheres.” Gender, Health, Medicine & Sexuality in Victorian England. Victoria & Albert Museum.
- “Gender Matters.” *The Victorian Web*.
- “The National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies.” *The Victorian Web*. Helena Wojtczak.
- “‘The Personal is Political’: Gender in Private & Public Life.” Gender, Health, Medicine & Sexuality in Victorian England. Victoria & Albert Museum.
- “Suffragists.” Learning: Dreamers and Dissenters. The British Library.
- “Victorian Britain: A Divided Nation?” Education. *The National Archives*.

Imperialism

- “The British Empire.” *The Victorian Web*. David Cody, Hartwick College.
- “British Empire.” *The National Archives*.

- "Kipling's Imperialism." *The Victorian Web*. David Cody, Hartwick College.
- Norton Topics: "Victorian Imperialism".
- "The British Empire"
- "Archaeology and Imperialism." BBC Radio *In Our Time*.

A Comprehensive general Victorians Site from Saylor.org English 410 Resources Page.

II

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806–1861)

2.

Biography



Figure 1: Drawing of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Born in 1806 at Coxhoe Hall, Durham, England, Elizabeth Barrett was an English poet influenced by the Romantic movement. The oldest of 12 children, Elizabeth was the first in her family born in England in over 200 years. For centuries, the Barrett family, who were part Creole, had lived in Jamaica, where they owned sugar plantations and relied on slave labor. Elizabeth's father, Edward Barrett Moulton Barrett, chose to raise his family in England while his fortune grew in Jamaica.

Educated at home, Elizabeth apparently had read passages from *Paradise Lost* and a number of Shakespearean plays, among other great works, before the age of 10. By her 12th year she had written her first "epic" poem, which consisted of four books of rhyming couplets. Two years later, Elizabeth developed a lung ailment that plagued her for the rest of her life. Doctors began treating her with morphine, which she would take until her death. While saddling a pony when she was 15, Elizabeth also suffered a spinal injury. Despite her ailments, her education continued to flourish. Throughout her teenage years, Elizabeth taught herself Hebrew so that she could read the Old Testament; her interests later turned to Greek studies. Accompanying her appetite for the classics was a passionate enthusiasm for her Christian faith, and she became active in the Bible and missionary societies of her church.

In 1826 Elizabeth anonymously published her collection *An Essay on Mind and Other Poems*. Two

years later, her mother passed away. The slow abolition of slavery in England and mismanagement of the plantations depleted the Barrett's income, and in 1832, Elizabeth's father sold his rural estate at a public auction. He moved his family to a coastal town and rented cottages for the next three years before settling permanently in London. While living on the sea coast, Elizabeth published her translation of *Prometheus Bound* (1833), by the Greek dramatist Aeschylus.

Gaining attention for her work in the 1830s, Elizabeth continued to live in her father's London house under his tyrannical rule. He began sending Elizabeth's younger siblings to Jamaica to help with the family's estates. Elizabeth bitterly opposed slavery and did not want her siblings sent away. During this time, she wrote *The Seraphim and Other Poems* (1838), expressing Christian sentiments in the form of classical Greek tragedy. Due to her weakening disposition, she was forced to spend a year at the sea in Torquay accompanied by her brother Edward, whom she referred to as "Bro." He drowned later that year while sailing, and Elizabeth returned home emotionally broken, becoming an invalid and a recluse. She spent the next five years in her bedroom at her father's home. She continued writing, however, and in 1844 produced a collection entitled simply *Poems*. This volume gained the attention of poet Robert Browning, whose work Elizabeth had praised in one of her poems, and he wrote her a letter.

Elizabeth and Robert, who was six years her junior, exchanged 574 letters over the next 20 months. Immortalized in 1930 in the play *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, by Rudolf Besier (1878–1942), their romance was bitterly opposed by her father, who did not want any of his children to marry. In 1846, the couple eloped and settled in Florence, Italy, where Elizabeth's health improved and she bore a son, Robert Wideman Browning. Her father never spoke to her again. Elizabeth's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, dedicated to her husband and written in secret before her marriage, was published in 1850. Critics generally consider the *Sonnets*—one of the most widely known collections of love lyrics in English—to be her best work. Admirers have compared her imagery to Shakespeare and her use of the Italian form to Petrarch.

Political and social themes embody Elizabeth's later work. She expressed her intense sympathy for the struggle for the unification of Italy in *Casa Guidi Windows* (1848–1851) and *Poems Before Congress* (1860). In 1857, Browning published her verse novel *Aurora Leigh*, which portrays male domination of a woman. In her poetry, she also addressed the oppression of the Italians by the Austrians, the child labor mines and mills of England, and slavery, among other social injustices. Although this decreased her popularity, Elizabeth was read and recognized around Europe.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning died in Florence on June 29, 1861.

Media Attributions

3.

Sonnets from the Portuguese

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

XXI

Say over again, and yet once over again,
That thou dost love me. Though the word repeated
Should seem a "cuckoo-song,[1]" as thou dost treat it,
Remember, never to the hill or plain,
Valley and wood, without her cuckoo-strain
Comes the fresh Spring in all her green completed.
Beloved, I, amid the darkness greeted
By a doubtful spirit-voice, in that doubt's pain
Cry, "Speak once more—thou lovest!" Who can fear
Too many stars, though each in heaven shall roll,
Too many flowers, though each shall crown the year?
Say thou dost love me, love me, love me—toll
The silver iterance!—only minding, Dear,
To love me also in silence with thy soul.

XXII

When our two souls stand up erect and strong,
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,
Until the lengthening wings break into fire
At either curved point,—what bitter wrong
Can the earth do to us, that we should not long
Be here contented? Think! In mounting higher,
The angels would press on us and aspire
To drop some golden orb of perfect song
Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay
Rather on earth, Beloved,—where the unfit
Contrarious moods of men recoil away
And isolate pure spirits, and permit
A place to stand and love in for a day,
With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

1. Repetitious.

XXXII

The first time that the sun rose on thine oath
To love me, I looked forward to the moon
To slacken all those bonds which seemed too soon
And quickly tied to make a lasting troth.
Quick-loving hearts, I thought, may quickly loathe;
And, looking on myself, I seemed not one
For such man's love!—more like an out-of-tune
Worn viol, a good singer would be wroth
To spoil his song with, and which, snatched in haste,
Is laid down at the first ill-sounding note.
I did not wrong myself so, but I placed
A wrong on thee. For perfect strains may float
'Neath master-hands, from instruments defaced,—
And great souls, at one stroke, may do and doat.

XLIII

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.
—1845-47, 1850

4.

The Cry of the Children

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

"Φηῦ, φηῦ, τί προσδέρκεσθέ μ' ὄμμασιν, τέκνα;"—*Medea*[1].

[Alas, alas, why do you gaze at me with your eyes, my children?]

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
And *that* cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows;
The young birds are chirping in the nest,
The young fawns are playing with the shadow,
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow
Why their tears are falling so?
The old man may weep for his to-morrow
Which is lost in Long Ago;
The old tree is leafless in the forest,
The old year is ending in the frost,
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest,
The old hope is hardest to be lost:
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,
In our happy Fatherland?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses
Down the cheeks of infancy;
"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary,
Our young feet," they say, "are very weak;

1. The title and first line are taken from the Chorus in response to the murders being committed in Euripedes' tragedy, *Medea*. Browning wrote the poem in response to *The Report of the Children's Employment Commission* (1843) by her friend, the poet Richard Henry Horne, who exposed the abuses against children employed in British mines and factories.

Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—
Our grave-rest is very far to seek:
Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children,
For the outside earth is cold,
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,
And the graves are for the old!”

“True,” say the children, “it may happen
That we die before our time:
Little Alice died last year, her grave is shapen
Like a snowball, in the rime.[2]
We looked into the pit prepared to take her:
Was no room for any work in the close clay!
From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,
Crying, ‘Get up, little Alice! it is day.’
If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries;
Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,
For the smile has time for growing in her eyes,—
And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in
The shroud, by the kirk-chime![3]
“It is good when it happens,” say the children,
“That we die before our time.”

Alas, alas, the children! they are seeking
Death in life, as best to have!
They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,
With a cerement[4] from the grave.
Go out, children, from the mine and from the city,
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do;
Pluck you handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty,
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through!
But they answer, “Are your cowslips of the meadows
Like our weeds anear the mine?
Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine!

“For oh,” say the children, “we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap;
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,
We fall upon our faces, trying to go;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,

2. Frost.
3. Church bell.
4. Shroud.

The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.
For, all day, we drag our burden tiring,
Through the coal-dark, underground;
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round."

"For all day, the wheels are droning, turning;
Their wind comes in our faces,
Till our hearts turn, our heads with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places:
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling,
Turns the long light that drops adown the wall,
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling;
All are turning, all the day, and we with all.
And all day, the iron wheels are droning,
And sometimes we could pray,
'O ye wheels,' (breaking out in a mad moaning),
'Stop! be silent for to-day !' "

Ay! be silent ! Let them hear each other breathing
For a moment, mouth to mouth!
Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing
Of their tender human youth!
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
Is not all the life God fashions or reveals:
Let them prove their living souls against the notion
That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!
Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,
Grinding life down from its mark;
And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward,
Spin on blindly in the dark.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,
To look up to Him and pray;
So the blessed One who blesseth all the others,
Will bless them another day.
They answer, "Who is God that He should hear us,
While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred?
When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us
Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word!
And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)
Strangers speaking at the door:
Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him,
Hears our weeping any more?

"Two words, indeed, of praying we remember,
And at midnight's hour of harm,

‘Our Father,’ looking upward in the chamber,
We say softly for a charm.
We know no other words, except ‘Our Father,’
And we think that, in some pause of angels’ song,
God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,
And hold both within His right hand which is strong.
‘Our Father!’ If He heard us, He would surely
(For they call Him good and mild)
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
‘Come and rest with me, my child.’

“But, no!” say the children, weeping faster,
“He is speechless as a stone:
And they tell us, of His image is the master
Who commands us to work on.
Go to!” say the children,— “up in Heaven,
Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.
Do not mock us; grief has made us unbelieving:
We look up for God, but tears have made us blind.”
Do ye hear the children weeping and disproving,
O my brothers, what ye preach?
For God’s possible is taught by His world’s loving —
And the children doubt of each.

And well may the children weep before you!
They are weary ere they run;
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory
Which is brighter than the sun:
They know the grief of man, without its wisdom;
They sink in man’s despair, without its calm;
Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,
Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm:
Are worn, as if with age, yet unretrievingly
The harvest of its memories cannot reap,—
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly:
Let them weep! let them weep!

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in high places,
With eyes turned on Deity.
“How long,” they say, “how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child’s heart, —
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,

And your purple[5] shows your path!
But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath!"
—1843

5. cf. Donne, invoking Herod's slaughter of the children in Matthew 2: 16: "...hast thou since/Purpled thy nail in blood of innocence?", "The Flea."

5.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

Sonnets from the Portuguese

1. Determine the rhyme scheme for each of these sonnets. To what type do the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* belong—the English or the Petrarchan form?

2. Log on to the Wikisource page for all 43 sonnets. Do any of the sonnets break from the standard rhyme scheme used in sonnets 21, 22, 32, and 43 above?

3. In terms of form, especially rhyme scheme, which English sonneteer does Barrett Browning most resemble: Sidney, Spenser, or Shakespeare? For Sidney, see *Astrophil and Stella*, Sonnets 31, 52, 74. For Spenser, see any of the sonnets in *Amoretti*. For Shakespeare, see Sonnet 1.

4. Barrett Browning knew the poetry of John Donne very well. Do any of the above sonnets resemble Donne's "sonnets" in terms of style or imagery?
5. In a short essay, compare and contrast one sonnet by Browning and one by either Shakespeare, Sidney, or Spenser.

Cry of the Children

Professor Florence Boos maintains an extensive site on Victorian literature, with helpful questions on many Victorian authors. The index to her study guides is well worth downloading. It can be found at the bottom of her page devoted to E.B. Browning's "Cry of the Children" and "The Runaway Slave" below:

1. In particular, are there ways in which the rhythms reinforce the theme of noisy, dirty, and unpleasant factory conditions?
2. What metaphors or recurrent themes does the author use to make her points (nature; death; youth and age; whirring of machinery)?
3. In what ways is the children's viewpoint different from that of adults? What is their view of death, and how does this reinforce the poem's themes? How do they respond to the death of little Alice?
4. What view of religion does the author seem to espouse? Who is responsible for the fact that the children are unable to conceive of a beneficent divine being?

Activities/Further Essay Topics

1. Compare the document from the Victorian Web about child labour with "Cry of the Children"; then discuss which is the more likely to make the reader take action against the abuses:

- "Testimony Gathered by Ashley's Mines Commission." *The Victorian Web*. Laura Del Col, West Virginia University.

2. Compare Barrett Browning's description of child labour with Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, particularly in the poems "Holy Thursday" and "Chimney Sweeper." Compare the children's attitude toward religion in both authors' works. Compare the last line of "The Chimney Sweeper" with the last stanza of "The Cry of the Children."

III

Robert Browning (1812–1889)

6.

Biography

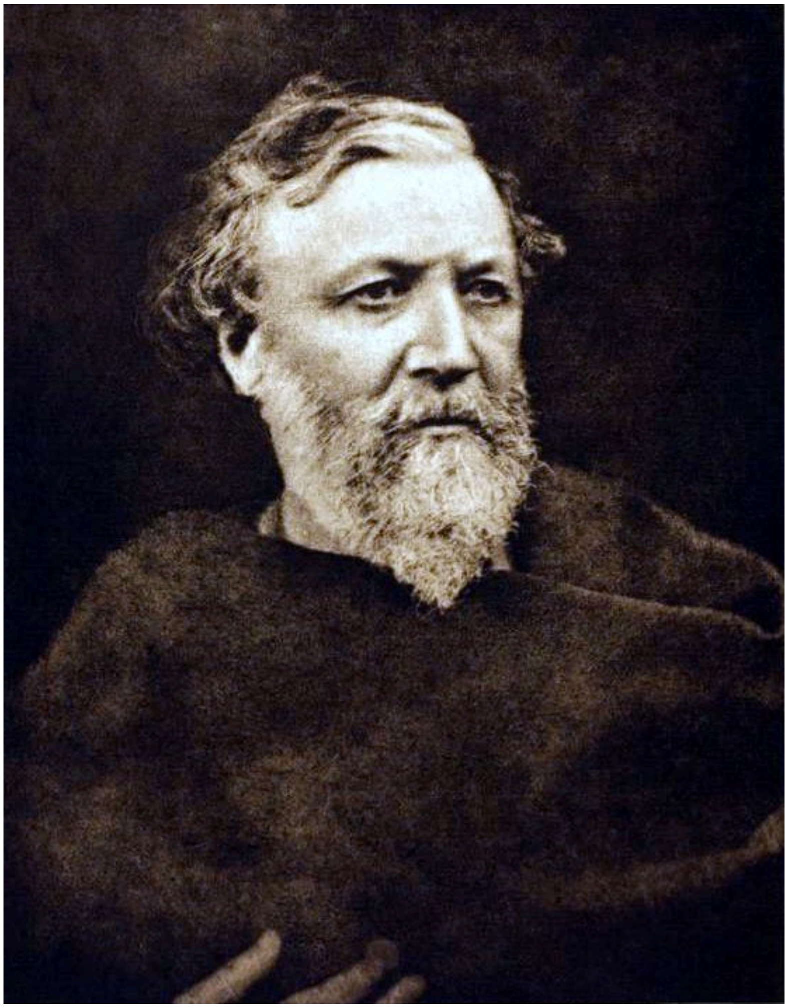


Figure 1: Robert Browning.

Robert Browning was born on May 7, 1812, in Camberwell, England. His mother was an accomplished pianist and a devout evangelical Christian. His father worked as a bank clerk and was also an artist, scholar, antiquarian, and collector of books and pictures. His rare book collection of more than 6,000 volumes included works in Greek, Hebrew, Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish. Much of Browning's education came from his well-read father. It is believed that he was already proficient at reading and writing by the age of five. A bright and anxious student, Browning learned Latin, Greek, and French by the time he was 14. From 14 to 16, he was educated at home, attended to by various tutors in music, drawing, dancing, and horsemanship. At the age of 12, he wrote a volume of Byronic verse entitled *Incondita*, which his parents attempted, unsuccessfully, to have published. In 1825, a cousin

gave Browning a collection of Shelley's poetry; Browning was so taken with the book that he asked for the rest of Shelley's works for his 13th birthday, and declared himself a vegetarian and an atheist in emulation of the poet. Despite this early passion, he apparently wrote no poems between the ages of 13 and 20. In 1828, Browning enrolled at the University of London, but he soon left, anxious to read and learn at his own pace. The random nature of his education later surfaced in his writing, leading to criticism of his poems' obscurities.

In 1833, Browning anonymously published his first major published work, *Pauline*, and in 1840 he published *Sordello*, which was widely regarded as a failure. He also tried his hand at drama, but his plays, including *Strafford*, which ran for five nights in 1837, and the *Bells and Pomegranates* series, were for the most part unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the techniques he developed through his dramatic monologues—especially his use of diction, rhythm, and symbol—are regarded as his most important contribution to poetry, influencing such major poets of the twentieth century as Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and Robert Frost.

After reading Elizabeth Barrett's *Poems* (1844) and corresponding with her for a few months, Browning met her in 1845. They were married in 1846, against the wishes of Barrett's father. The couple moved to Pisa and then Florence, where they continued to write. They had a son, Robert "Pen" Browning, in 1849, the same year Browning's *Collected Poems* was published. Elizabeth inspired Robert's collection of poems *Men and Women* (1855), which he dedicated to her. Now regarded as one of Browning's best works, the book was received with little notice at the time; its author was then primarily known as Elizabeth Barrett's husband.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning died in 1861, and Robert and Pen Browning moved to London soon after. Browning went on to publish *Dramatis Personae* (1863), and *The Ring and the Book* (1868). The latter, based on a 17th century Italian murder trial, received wide critical acclaim, finally earning Browning renown and respect in the twilight of his career. The Browning Society was founded while he still lived, in 1881, and he was awarded honorary degrees by Oxford University in 1882 and the University of Edinburgh in 1884. Robert Browning died on the same day that his final volume of verse, *Asolando*, was published, in 1889.

Media Attributions

7.

Porphyria's Lover

Robert Browning

The rain set early in to-night,
The sullen wind was soon awake,
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
And did its worst to vex the lake:
I listened with heart fit to break.
When glided in Porphyria; straight
She shut the cold out and the storm,
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;
Which done, she rose, and from her form
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,
And laid her soiled gloves by, untied
Her hat and let the damp hair fall,
And, last, she sat down by my side
And called me. When no voice replied,
She put my arm about her waist,
And made her smooth white shoulder bare,
And all her yellow hair displaced,
And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,
And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,
Murmuring how she loved me — she
Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,
To set its struggling passion free
From pride, and vainer ties dissever,
And give herself to me for ever.
But passion sometimes would prevail,
Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain
A sudden thought of one so pale
For love of her, and all in vain:
So, she was come through wind and rain.
Be sure I looked up at her eyes
Happy and proud; at last I knew
Porphyria worshipped me; surprise
Made my heart swell, and still it grew
While I debated what to do.
That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
Perfectly pure and good: I found

A thing to do, and all her hair
In one long yellow string I wound
Three times her little throat around,
And strangled her. No pain felt she;
I am quite sure she felt no pain.
As a shut bud that holds a bee,
I warily oped her lids: again
Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.
And I untightened next the tress
About her neck; her cheek once more
Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:
I propped her head up as before,
Only, this time my shoulder bore
Her head, which droops upon it still:
The smiling rosy little head,
So glad it has its utmost will,
That all it scorned at once is fled,
And I, its love, am gained instead!
Porphyria's love: she guessed not how
Her darling one wish would be heard.
And thus we sit together now,
And all night long we have not stirred,
And yet God has not said a word!
—1836, 1842

8.

My Last Duchess

Robert Browning

FERRARA

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I[1] call
That piece a wonder, now; Fra Pandolf[2]'s hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Fra Pandolf " by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek; perhaps
Fra Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat." Such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?— too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name

1. The Duke is based upon Alfonso II, fifth Duke of Ferrara (1533-97). In 1558, he married 14-year-old Lucrezia de' Medici, who died in 1561 under suspicious circumstances.
2. Brother Pandolf, a fictitious painter from a monastic order.

With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—which I have not—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse—
E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretense
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune[3], though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck[4] cast in bronze for me!
—1842

3. Roman sea god, here depicted as subduing a mythical beast, half horse, half fish.
4. An imaginary sculptor. The reference may be an indirect compliment to Frederick of Innsbruck, Count of Tyrol, whose daughter Alfonso married in 1565.

9.

The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church

Robert Browning

Rome[1] 15–
  Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity![2]
Draw round my bed: is Anselm[3] keeping back?
Nephews — sons mine . . . ah God, I know not! Well —
She, men would have to be your mother once,
Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!
What's done is done, and she is dead beside,
Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,
And as she died so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world's a dream.
Life, how and what is it? As here I lie
In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.
Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace;
And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:
— Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;
Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner South
He graced his carrion with. God curse the same!
Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side[4],
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
And up into the aery dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk;
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
And 'neath my tabernacle[5] take my rest,
With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.

1. The Basilica of Santa Prassede, commemorating a virgin saint who gave her wealth to the poor, is in Rome. It has no tomb such as that imagined by Browning's Bishop.
2. cf. Ecclesiastes 1.2: "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher...all is vanity."
3. One of the bishop's illegitimate sons, euphemistically referred to as "nephews."
4. The people's right side of the altar from which the Epistle is read during Mass.
5. Canopy over a tomb.

— Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone[6],
Put me where I may look at him! True peach,
Rosy and flawless: how I earned the prize!
Draw close: that conflagration of my church
— What then? So much was saved if aught were missed!
My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig
The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood,
Drop water gently till the surface sink,
And if ye find . . . Ah God, I know not, I! . . .
Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft,
And corded up in a tight olive-frail,
Some lump, ah God, of , *lapis lazuli*[7],
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast . . .
Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all,
That brave Frascati[8] villa with its bath,
So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,
Like God the Father's globe on both his hands
Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,
For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!
Swift as a weaver's shuttle[9] fleet our years:
Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say basalt[10] for my slab, sons? Black —
'T was ever antique-black[11] I meant! How else
Shall ye contrast my frieze[12] to come beneath?
The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
Those Pans and Nymphs[13] ye wot of, and perchance
Some tripod, thyrsus[14], with a vase or so,
The Saviour at his sermon on the mount,
Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,
And Moses with the tables . . . but I know
Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,
Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp
Bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy travertine[15]
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!

6. Cheap marble.
7. Semi-precious blue stone.
8. A resort town near Rome.
9. cf. Job 7.9: "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope."
10. Greenish or brown-black rock often used for tombstones.
11. Black stone, costlier than basalt.
12. A band of painted or sculpted decoration.
13. Pan, Greek god of the forest, often associated with sexual license. Nymphs are beautiful maidens. Here the bishop confuses the worldly with the spiritual, the pagan with the Christian, in his ideas for the bas-relief sculptures.
14. Ornamented staff of Bacchus.
15. Limestone.

Nay, boys, ye love me — all of jasper[16], then!
'T is jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve.
My bath must needs be left behind, alas!
One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,
There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world —
And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs?
— That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,
Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's[17] every word,
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line —
Tully, my masters? Ulpian[18] serves his need!
And then how I shall lie through centuries,
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
And see God made and eaten[19] all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!
For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point[20],
And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth, drop
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-work:
And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,
About the life before I lived this life,
And this life too, popes, cardinals and priests,
Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount[21],
Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,
And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,
— Aha, ELUCESCEBAT[22] quoth our friend?
No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!
Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.[23]
All lapis, all, sons! Else I give the Pope
My villas! Will ye ever eat my heart?
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,
They glitter like your mother's for my soul,
Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,

16. Translucent green quartz.
17. Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC) Great Roman philosopher, linguist, and orator.
18. Domitius Ulpianus (AD 170-228). A Roman jurist whose style was considered inferior to that of Cicero.
19. Slurring allusion to the doctrine of transubstantiation.
20. The tomb would be surmounted by a recumbent effigy of the occupant.
21. The bishop confuses St. Praxed, a woman, with Christ, who gave the Sermon on the Mount.
22. "He was illustrious," the Ulpian Latin chosen for Gandolf's tomb by the bishop. Ciceronian Latin would be "elucebat."
23. cf. Genesis 47.9.

Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase
With grapes, and add a vizor and a Term[24],
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx
That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,
To comfort me on my entablature[25]
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask
“Do I live, am I dead?” There, leave me, there!
For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
To death — ye wish it — God, ye wish it! Stone —
Gritstone[26], a-crumble! Clammy squares which sweat
As if the corpse they keep were oozing through —
And no more lapis to delight the world!
Well go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
But in a row: and, going, turn your backs
— Ay, like departing altar-ministrants,
And leave me in my church, the church for peace,
That I may watch at leisure if he leers —
Old Gandolf, at me, from his onion-stone,
As still he envied me, so fair she was!
—1845

24. A vizor is the mask of a helmet; “Term” refers to a bust on a pedestal, erected to honour Terminus, the Roman god of boundaries.
25. Platform.
26. Cheap sandstone.

10.

Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister

Robert Browning

Gr-r-r—there go, my heart's abhorrence!
Water your damned flower-pots, do!
If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,
God's blood, [1]would not mine kill you!
What? your myrtle-bush wants trimming?
Oh, that rose has prior claims—
Needs its leaden vase filled brimming?
Hell dry you up with its flames!

At the meal we sit together;
Salve tibi![2] I must hear
Wise talk of the kind of weather,
Sort of season, time of year:
Not a plenteous cork crop: scarcely
Dare we hope oak-galls,[3] *I doubt;*
What's the Latin name for "parsley"?
What's the Greek name for "swine's snout"?[4]

Whew! We'll have our platter burnished,
Laid with care on our own shelf!
With a fire-new spoon we're furnished,
And a goblet for ourself,
Rinsed like something sacrificial
Ere 'tis fit to touch our chaps[5]—
Marked with L. for our initial!
(He-he! There his lily snaps!)

Saint, forsooth! While brown Dolores
Squats outside the Convent bank
With Sanchicha, telling stories,
Steeping tresses in the tank,
Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horsehairs,

1. An archaic oath, often "'sblood"; similar to Gadzooks (God's hooks) or Zounds (His wounds).
2. Latin, "Hail to you." All italicized words are those of Brother Lawrence.
3. Swellings on diseased oak leaves, yielding tannin, used in dyeing.
4. Translation of the Latin—*rostrum porcinum*—for dandelion.
5. Jaws, mouth.

—Can't I see his dead eye glow,
Bright as 'twere a Barbary corsair's?[6]
(That is, if he'd let it show!)

When he finishes refection,[7]
Knife and fork he never lays
Cross-wise, to my recollection,
As do I, in Jesu's praise.
I the Trinity illustrate,
Drinking watered orange pulp—
In three sips the Arian[8] frustrate;
While he drains his at one gulp!

Oh, those melons! if he's able
We're to have a feast; so nice!
One goes to the Abbot's table,
All of us get each a slice.
How go on your flowers? None double?
Not one fruit-sort can you spy?
Strange!—And I, too, at such trouble,
Keep them close-nipped on the sly!

There's a great text in Galatians,[9]
Once you trip on it, entails
Twenty-nine distinct damnations,
One sure, if another fails;
If I trip him just a-dying,
Sure of heaven as sure can be,
Spin him round and send him flying
Off to hell, a Manichee?[10]

Or, my scrofulous French novel
On grey paper with blunt type!
Simply glance at it, you grovel
Hand and foot in Belial's [11] gripe;
If I double down its pages
At the woeful sixteenth print,
When he gathers his greengages,
Ope a sieve and slip it in't?

6. Pirate of Africa's Barbary Coast of northern Africa, renowned for fierceness and lechery.
7. The taking of food and drink, refreshment.
8. Heresy which denied the doctrine of the Trinity by asserting that the Son of God was a subordinate entity to God the Father.
9. cf. Galatians 5:19-21, which lists numerous mortal sins.
10. A heretic. The Manichean holds that the universe is controlled by equally balanced forces of good and evil.The speaker hopes to trick Brother Lawrence into uttering such a heresy before Lawrence can recant.
11. The Devil's grip.

Or, there's Satan!—one might venture
Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave
Such a flaw in the indenture[12]
As he'd miss till, past retrieve,
Blasted lay that rose-acacia
We're so proud of! *Hy, Zy, Hine…*[13]
'St, there's Vespers! *Plena gratia*
Ave, Virgo! [14] Gr-r-r—you swine!

—1842

12. The speaker considers selling his soul to Satan in exchange for Lawrence's damnation, but would leave a loophole through which he can escape damnation himself.
13. Probably the opening words of a curse against Lawrence.
14. "Full of grace; Hail, Virgin!"

11.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

Porphyria's Lover

1. Why does the speaker murder Porphyria?
2. Read the following essay, which argues that Shakespeare's *Othello* is another source for Browning's "Porphyria's Lover."

My Last Duchess

1. What is the rhyme scheme in this poem?
2. Give some examples of enjambment in the poem. What purpose does enjambment serve in this poem?
3. What is the dramatic situation in the poem? Who is speaking and to whom?
4. Is there any dramatic movement in the poem?
5. What were the duchess's alleged faults?
6. How does Browning engage our sympathies for the duchess?

Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister

1. What is the speaker's dominant characteristic?
2. What is the main characteristic of Brother Lawrence?
3. In what way might Browning have used Friar Lawrence in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to characterize his own Brother Lawrence?

The Bishop Orders His Tomb

1. Who is Anselm?
2. Is Browning criticizing aspects of 16th century Roman culture?

3. Of what sins is the bishop guilty?
4. Why is the choice of St. Praxed as the site of this bishop's tomb ironic?
5. List a few appropriately conventional sentiments uttered by the bishop.
6. List some surprisingly unconventional sentiments he utters.
7. How do you explain line 95: "St. Praxed at his sermon on the mount"?

Essay topics

Write an essay of 1,000 to 1,500 words on irony in "My Last Duchess," "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister," and "The Bishop Orders His Tomb."

Philip Allingham notes, "Browning is noted as a writer of Dramatic Monologues, in which a single 'actor' or persona (rather than the poet) speaks to an implied auditor and is, as it were, overheard by the reader (who has no authorial comment to shape his or her interpretation of the characters and their circumstances)." However, this poem is called a entitled a "soliloquy." What features of "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister" render the poem a soliloquy rather than a dramatic monologue? In particular, who is the poem's "implied auditor"? Please refer to a good glossary of literary terms, and then in an essay of 1,000 to 1500 words, discuss any two of "My Last Duchess," "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister," and "The Bishop Orders His Tomb" as dramatic monologues.

Compare any one of Browning's dramatic monologues to one by Donne, such as "The Flea" or "The Canonization."

Resources

Film Treatments:

The Bishop Orders His Tomb



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QR Code the Bishop Orders His Tomb

Porphyria's Lover



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QR Code for Porphyria's Lover

Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister



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QR Code Soliloquy of Spanish Cloister

Resources

About the poems of Robert Browning

IV

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892)

12.

Biography

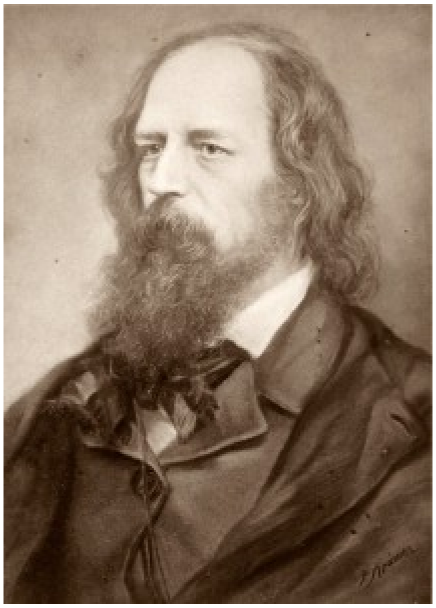


Figure 1: Alfred Tennyson.

Born on August 6, 1809, in Somersby, Lincolnshire, England, Alfred Tennyson is one of the best-loved Victorian poets. Tennyson, the fourth of 12 children, showed an early talent for writing. At the age of 12 he wrote a 6,000-line epic poem. His father, the Reverend George Tennyson, tutored his sons in classical and modern languages. In the 1820s, however, Tennyson's father began to suffer frequent mental breakdowns that were exacerbated by alcoholism. One of Tennyson's brothers had violent quarrels with his father, a second was later confined to an insane asylum, and another became an opium addict.

Tennyson escaped home in 1827 to attend Trinity College, Cambridge. In that same year, he and his brother Charles published *Poems by Two Brothers*. Although the poems in the book were mostly juvenilia, they attracted the attention of the "Apostles," an undergraduate literary club led by Arthur Hallam. The Apostles provided Tennyson, who was tremendously shy, with much needed friendship and confidence as a poet. Hallam and Tennyson became the best of friends; they toured Europe together in 1830 and again in 1832. Hallam's sudden death in 1833 greatly affected the young poet. The long elegy *In Memoriam* and many of Tennyson's other poems are tributes to Hallam.

In 1830, Tennyson published *Poems*, *Chiefly Lyrical*, and in 1832 he published a second volume entitled simply *Poems*. Some reviewers condemned these books as "affected" and "obscure." Tennyson, stung by the reviews, would not publish another book for nine years. In 1836, he became engaged to Emily Sellwood, but when he lost his inheritance on a bad investment in 1840, Sellwood's family called off the engagement. In 1842, however, Tennyson's *Poems* in two volumes was a tremendous critical and popular success. In 1850, with the publication of *In Memoriam*, Tennyson became one of Britain's most

popular poets. He was selected Poet Laureate in succession to Wordsworth. In that same year, he finally married Emily Sellwood. They had two sons, Hallam and Lionel.

At the age of 41, Tennyson had established himself as the most popular poet of the Victorian era. The money from his poetry (at times exceeding 10,000 pounds per year) allowed him to purchase a house in the country and to write in relative seclusion. His physical appearance—he was a large and bearded man and he regularly wore a cloak and a broad-brimmed hat—enhanced his notoriety. He read his poetry with a booming voice, which was often compared to that of Dylan Thomas In 1859, Tennyson published the first poems of *Idylls of the Kings*, which sold more than 10,000 copies in one month. In 1884 he accepted a peerage, becoming Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Tennyson died on October 6, 1892, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

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13.

The Lady of Shalott

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Part I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold[1] and meet the sky;
And through the field the road runs by
To many-towered Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow[2]
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.
    Willows whiten[3] , aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four grey walls, and four grey towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.
    By the margin, willow-veiled,
Slide the heavy barges trailed
By slow horses; and unhailed
The shallop[4] flitteth silken-sailed
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?
    Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,

1. A plain.
2. Bloom.
3. The white underside of the willow leaves are lifted by the wind.
4. A small, open boat propelled by oars or sails and used mainly in shallow waters.

Down to towered Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

Part II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay[5]
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.
And moving through a mirror[6] clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls[7],
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.
Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-haired page in crimson clad,
Goes by to towered Camelot;
And sometimes through the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.
But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often through the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;

5. Pause.
6. At her loom, the lady faces the back of her tapestry, and weaves by consulting a mirror in which the design is reflected.
7. Peasants.

"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

Part III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling through the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves[8]
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneeled
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.
The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazoned baldric[9] slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.
All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often through the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.
His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra[10]," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.
She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the room,

8. Armour for the leg below the knee.
9. A belt worn over one shoulder to support a sword or bugle.
10. In Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, (4.3: 11-12), Autolycus sings about "tumbling in the hay" with his "aunts" (whores).

She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror cracked from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

Part IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over towered Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.
    And down the river's dim expanse,
Like some bold seër in a trance
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.
    Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Through the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.
    Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turned to towered Camelot.
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.
Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."
—1832, 1842

14.

From the Princess

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

‘Blame not thyself too much,’ I said, ‘nor blame
Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws;
These were the rough ways of the world till now.
Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know
The woman’s cause is man’s: they rise or sink
Together, dwarfed or godlike, bond or free:
For she that out of Lethe scales with man
The shining steps of Nature, shares with man
His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,
Stays all the fair young planet in her hands—
If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,
How shall men grow? but work no more alone!
Our place is much: as far as in us lies
We two will serve them both in aiding her—
Will clear away the parasitic forms
That seem to keep her up but drag her down—
Will leave her space to burgeon out of all
Within her—let her make herself her own
To give or keep, to live and learn and be
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
For woman is not undevelopt man,
But diverse: could we make her as the man,
Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference.
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
The man be more of woman, she of man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words;
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
Sit side by side, full-summed in all their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
Distinct in individualities,

But like each other even as those who love.
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men:
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm:
Then springs the crowning race of humankind.
May these things be!'
Sighing she spoke 'I fear
They will not.'
'Dear, but let us type them now
In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest
Of equal; seeing either sex alone
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
The single pure and perfect animal,
The two-celled heart beating, with one full stroke,
Life.'
And again sighing she spoke: 'A dream
That once was mind! what woman taught you this?'
—1847

15.

The Lotos-Eaters

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

This poem is based on Homer's Odyssey, Chapter 9, which describes a visit by Ulysses and his men to the home of the Lotos-eaters (also "lotus") on their way home from the Trojan War. Those who ate of the honey-sweet fruit of the lotos tree became indolent and forgot their home.

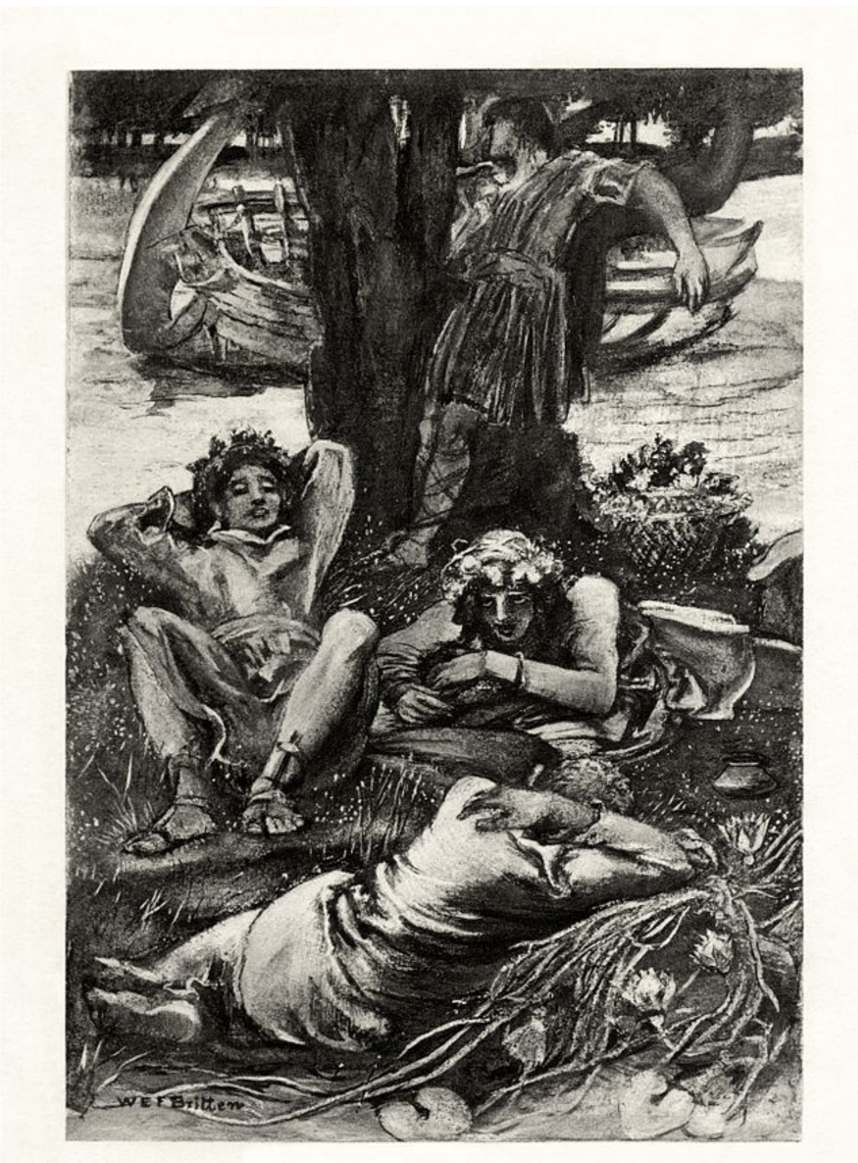


Figure 2. W.E.F. Britten – The Early Poems of Alfred, Lord Tennyson – The Lotos-Eaters.

"Courage!" he[1] said, and pointed toward the land,
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn[2], did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale[3];
A land where all things always seem'd the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, "We will return no more";

1. Odysseus, legendary Greek king of Ithaca, known also by his Roman name Ulysses.
2. Sheer linen.
3. An aromatic plant resembling ginger.

And all at once they sang, "Our island home[4]
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."
Choric Song[5]

I

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm!"
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

III

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

4. Ithaca, an island on the west coast of Greece.
5. Sung by the mariners.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o’er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other’s whisper’d speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap’d over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffer’d change:
For surely now our household hearths are cold,
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years’ war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile:
‘Tis hard to settle order once again.

There is confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth[6] and moly[7],
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world:
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd—down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian[8] valleys dwell,

6. An imaginary flower said never to fade.
7. Hermes gave Ulysses this magical flower to protect him from the wiles of Circe, the enchantress in Chapter 10 of Odyssey.
8. Valleys of the Elysian fields, or Greek paradise.

Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel[9].
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;
O, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

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9. Homer describes the meadows of the afterlife as being covered with asphodel, a narcissus-like plant.

16.

Ulysses

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

The main source of this dramatic monologue is Dante's Inferno XXVI, 94-126. *Here Ulysses sets out westward through the Pillars of Hercules: "When I left Circe….not fondness for my son, …nor Penelope's claim to the joys of love could drive out of my mind the lust to experience the far-flung world….I put out on the…open sea/with a single ship/and only those few souls/who stayed true when the rest deserted me." But Tennyson melds details of this account with those of Homer's* Odyssey 19-24, *after he has returned to Ithaca and been reunited with his wife and son and resumed his duties as king.*

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees; all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades[1]
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy,
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end[2],
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,

1. A cluster of stars in Taurus, associated by the ancients with rainy weather.
2. cf. Ulysses' speech in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* 3.3. 144-47: "Perseverance.../Keeps honour bright. To have done is to hang/ Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail/In monumental mockery."

A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
    This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the scepter and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
    There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you[3] and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles[4],
And see the great Achilles[5], whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.
    —1833, 1842

3. The companions of Ulysses.
4. The Elysian Fields, or Greek paradise.
5. Greek hero of the *Iliad* who defeated Hector in the Trojan War. When he died, his arms went to Ulysses.

17.

Break, Break, Break

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.
  O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!
  And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand[1],
And the sound of a voice that is still!
  Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.
  —1834, 1842

1. Like "Ulysses" and "In Memoriam," this poem was inspired by the death of Arthur Hallam.

18.

from In Memoriam A. H. H.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Obiit MDCCCXXXIII[1]
  Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;
  Thine are these orbs of light and shade[2];
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.
  Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.
  Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou.
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.
  Our little systems[3] have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.
  We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.
  Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before[4],
  But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear:
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

1. He died in 1883.
2. Sun and moon.
3. Systems of philosophy.
4. Before mind and soul came to sing different tunes with the advent of science.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me;
What seem'd my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.
Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.
Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.
—*1849*.[5]

I

I held it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones[6],
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.
But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?
Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss:
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the ground,
Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
'Behold the man that loved and lost,
But all he was is overworn.'

II

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the under-lying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.
The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the flock;
And in the dusk of thee, the clock[7]
Beats out the little lives of men.
O, not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,

5. The 11 stanzas that Tennyson wrote as a prologue were written after the rest of the poem was complete.
6. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832).
7. The clock of the church tower behind the yew.

Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom[8]:
And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip?
'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run[9];
A web is wov'n across the sky;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun:
'And all the phantom, Nature, stands?
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own,?
A hollow form with empty hands.'
And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good;
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV

To Sleep I give my powers away;
My will is bondsman to the dark;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse and say:
O heart, how fares it with thee now,
That thou should'st fail from thy desire,
Who scarcely darest to inquire,
'What is it makes me beat so low?'
Something it is which thou hast lost,
Some pleasure from thine early years.
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost!
Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darken'd eyes;
With morning wakes the will, and cries,
'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

V

I sometimes hold it half a sin

8. The yew tree, symbolic of grief, has a very long life.
9. cf. "Planets and Suns run blindly thro' the sky," Pope, "Essay on Man", I. 252.

To put in words the grief I feel;
For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.
But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.
In words, like weeds[10], I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the cold:
But that large grief which these enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

VI

One writes, that 'Other friends remain,'
That 'Loss is common to the race'?
And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.
That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more:
Too common! Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.
O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgest now thy gallant son;
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.
O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow'd,
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud[11]
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.
Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him well;
Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something thought;
Expecting still his advent home;
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day,'
Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'
O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove[12],
That sittest ranging golden hair;
And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!
For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest;

10. Mourning clothes.
11. Sailors were often buried in their own hammocks, which were weighted to allow the corpse to sink.
12. Tennyson's sister Emilia (1811-87), who had been engaged to Hallam. She later married Richard Jesse, a British naval officer, and their eldest son was given the names Arthur Henry Hallam.

And thinking 'this will please him best,'
She takes a riband or a rose;
For he will see them on to-night;
And with the thought her colour burns;
And, having left the glass, she turns
Once more to set a ringlet right;
And, even when she turn'd, the curse
Had fallen, and her future Lord
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.
O what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of good?
To her, perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.

VII

Dark house[13], by which once more I stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,
A hand that can be clasp'd no more?
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.
He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

VIII

A happy lover who has come
To look on her that loves him well,
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,
And learns her gone and far from home;
He saddens, all the magic light
Dies off at once from bower and hall,
And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight:
So find I every pleasant spot
In which we two were wont to meet,
The field, the chamber, and the street,
For all is dark where thou art not.
Yet as that other, wandering there
In those deserted walks, may find
A flower beat with rain and wind,
Which once she foster'd up with care;
So seems it in my deep regret,

13. The house at 67 Wimpole Street where Hallam had lived.

O my forsaken heart, with thee
And this poor flower of poesy
Which little cared for fades not yet.
But since it pleased a vanish'd eye[14],
I go to plant it on his tomb,
That if it can it there may bloom,
Or, dying, there at least may die.

IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore[15]
Sailest the placid ocean-plains
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.
So draw him home to those that mourn
In vain; a favourable speed
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.
All night no ruder air perplex
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor[16], bright
As our pure love, thro' early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.
Sphere all your lights around, above;
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
My friend, the brother of my love;
My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me.

X

I hear the noise about thy keel;
I hear the bell struck in the night:
I see the cabin-window bright;
I see the sailor at the wheel.
Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,
And travell'd men from foreign lands;
And letters unto trembling hands;
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.
So bring him; we have idle dreams:
This look of quiet flatters thus
Our home-bred fancies. O to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems
To rest beneath the clover sod,

14. Hallam wrote a positive review of Tennyson's early poems in 1831.
15. Hallam's body was brought back by ship from Trieste, the Italian port.
16. The morning star.

That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God;
  Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine;
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XI

  Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground:
  Calm and deep peace on this high wold[17],
And on these dews that drench the furze[18],
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold:
  Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main:
  Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair:
  Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XII

  Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings;
  Like her I go; I cannot stay;
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away
  O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern skies,
And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,
  And saying; 'Comes he thus, my friend?
Is this the end of all my care?'

17. An upland plain.
18. A spiny evergreen shrub.

And circle moaning in the air:
‘Is this the end? Is this the end?’
And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away.

XIII

Tears of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
Her place is empty, fall like these;
Which weep a loss for ever new,
A void where heart on heart reposed;
And, where warm hands have prest and closed,
Silence, till I be silent too.
Which weep the comrade of my choice,
An awful thought, a life removed,
The human-hearted man I loved,
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.
Come, Time, and teach me, many years,
I do not suffer in a dream;
For now so strange do these things seem,
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears;
My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approaching sails,
As tho’ they brought but merchants’ bales,
And not the burthen that they bring.

XIV

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touch’d the land to-day,
And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port;
And standing, muffled round with woe,
Should see thy passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the plank,
And beckoning unto those they know;
And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine;
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
And ask a thousand things of home;
And I should tell him all my pain,
And how my life had droop’d of late,
And he should sorrow o’er my state
And marvel what possess’d my brain;
And I perceived no touch of change,

No hint of death in all his frame,
But found him all in all the same,
I should not feel it to be strange.

XV

To-night the winds begin to rise
And roar from yonder dropping day:
The last red leaf is whirl’d away,
The rooks are blown about the skies;
The forest crack’d, the waters curl’d,
The cattle huddled on the lea;
And wildly dash’d on tower and tree
The sunbeam strikes along the world:
And but for fancies, which aver
That all thy motions gently pass
Athwart a plane of molten glass[19],
I scarce could brook the strain and stir
That makes the barren branches loud;
And but for fear it is not so,
The wild unrest that lives in woe
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud
That rises upward always higher,
And onward drags a labouring breast,
And topples round the dreary west,
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

XIX

The Danube to the Severn[20] gave
The darken’d heart that beat no more;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.
There twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.
The Wye is hush’d nor moved along,
And hush’d my deepest grief of all,
When fill’d with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.
The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

19. Calm sea.
20. Hallam died in Vienna, on the Danube River, and was buried in the church at Clevedon on the Severn River in southwest England.

XXIV

And was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say?
The very source and fount of Day
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.
If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the Paradise
It never look'd to human eyes
Since our first Sun arose and set.
And is it that the haze of grief
Makes former gladness loom so great?
The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief?
Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far;
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not, when we moved therein?

XXVII

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:
I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;
Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.
I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ[21]:
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.
Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,

21. As the first Christmas (1833) after Hallam's death approaches, the poet listens to the church bells from four villages. A.C. Bradley suggests that the second part of "In Memoriam" begins here in XXVIII. *A Commentary on Tennyson's In Memoriam.*

Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound:
Each voice four changes[22] on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.
This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again:
But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controll'd me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,
The merry merry bells of Yule.

XXX

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Chrismas hearth;
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.
At our old pastimes in the hall
We gambol'd, making vain pretence
Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute Shadow watching all.
We paused: the winds were in the beech:
We heard them sweep the winter land;
And in a circle hand-in-hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.
Then echo-like our voices rang;
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
A merry song we sang with him
Last year: impetuously we sang:
We ceased: a gentler feeling crept
Upon us: surely rest is meet:
'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is sweet,'
And silence follow'd, and we wept.
Our voices took a higher range;
Once more we sang: 'They do not die
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they change;
'Rapt from the fickle and the frail
With gather'd power, yet the same,
Pierces the keen seraphic flame
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'
Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,

22. Arrangements of church bell ringing.

Draw forth the cheerful day from night:
O Father, touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born.

XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is;
This round of green, this orb of flame,
Fantastic beauty such as lurks
In some wild Poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.
What then were God to such as I?
'Twere hardly worth my while to choose
Of things all mortal, or to use
A tattle patience ere I die;
'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,
To drop head-foremost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

XXXIX

Old warder[23] of these buried bones,
And answering now my random stroke
With fruitful cloud and living smoke,
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones
And dippest toward the dreamless head,
To thee too comes the golden hour
When flower is feeling after flower;
But Sorrow?fixt upon the dead,
And darkening the dark graves of men,?
What whisper'd from her lying lips?
Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
And passes into gloom again.

L

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.
Be near me when the sensuous frame
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

23. The churchyard yew. This section was written in 1868; cf. II.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing
And weave their petty cells and die.
Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.

LIV

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;
That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;
That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.
Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.
So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

LV

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul[24]?
Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type[25] she seems,
So careless of the single life;
That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,
I falter where I firmly trod,

24. The inner consciousness—the divine in man [Tennyson's note].
25. Species; i.e., Nature ensures the preservation of the species but is indifferent to the fate of the individual.

And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,
  I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope[26].

LVI

  'So careful of the type?' but no.
From scarpèd cliff and quarried stone
She[27] cries, 'A thousand types are gone[28]:
I care for nothing, all shall go.
  'Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death:
The spirit does but mean the breath:
I know no more.' And he, shall he,
  Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes[29] of fruitless prayer,
  Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law?
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed?
  Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills?
  No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.
  O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LIX

  O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife,

26. Tennyson's son Hallam writes in the biography of his father, "...by 'the larger hope' that the whole human race would through, perhaps, ages of suffering, be at length purified and saved" (*Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir,* I, 321-22).
27. Nature.
28. The new science of geology, particularly in Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830) , which Tennyson had read, was providing evidence that countless forms of life have disappeared from the earth.
29. Temples.

My bosom-friend and half of life;
As I confess it needs must be;
O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good.
My centred passion cannot move,
Nor will it lessen from to-day;
But I'll have leave at times to play
As with the creature of my love;
And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to come,
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west[30],
There comes a glory on the walls;
Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.
The mystic glory swims away;
From off my bed the moonlight dies;
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray;
And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXXII

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again[31],
And howlest, issuing out of night,
With blasts that blow the poplar white,
And lash with storm the streaming pane?
Day, when my crown'd estate[32] begun
To pine in that reverse of doom[33],
Which sicken'd every living bloom,
And blurr'd the splendour of the sun;

30. Hallam was buried near the Severn River in southwestern England.
31. The first anniversary of Hallam's death, September 15, 1884.
32. State of happiness.
33. Reversal of fortunes as the result of Hallam's death.

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make the rose
Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower;
Who might'st have heaved a windless flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd
A chequer-work of beam and shade
Along the hills, yet look'd the same.
As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,
When the dark hand struck down thro' time,
And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,
Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows
Thro' clouds that drench the morning star,
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,
And up thy vault with roaring sound
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

LXXVIII

Again at Christmas[34] did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
The silent snow possess'd the earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve:
The yule-clog[35] sparkled keen with frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.
As in the winters left behind,
Again our ancient games had place,
The mimic picture's[36] breathing grace,
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.
Who show'd a token of distress?
No single tear, no mark of pain:
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
O grief, can grief be changed to less?
O last regret, regret can die!
No—mixt with all this mystic frame,
Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXX

If any vague desire should rise,

34. The second Christmas (1884) after Hallam's death.
35. Yule log.
36. Tableau-vivant; literally, "living picture," a silent and motionless group of people arranged to represent a scene or incident.

That holy Death ere Arthur died
Had moved me kindly from his side,
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes;
Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
The grief my loss in him had wrought,
A grief as deep as life or thought,
But stay'd in peace with God and man.
I make a picture in the brain;
I hear the sentence that he speaks;
He bears the burthen of the weeks
But turns his burthen into gain.
His credit thus shall set me free;
And, influence-rich to soothe and save,
Unused example from the grave
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXXVI

Sweet after showers[37], ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare
The round of space, and rapt below
Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
And shadowing down the horned flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow
The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly
From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odour streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

LXXXIX

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;
And thou, with all thy breadth and height
Of foliage, towering sycamore;
How often, hither wandering down,
My Arthur found your shadows fair,
And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town:

37. This poem signals "the full new life which is beginning to revive in the poet's heart and to dispel the last shadow of the evil dreams which Nature seemed to lend when he was under the sway of...Doubt and Death" (Bradley, 223).

He brought an eye for all he saw;
He mixt in all our simple sports;
They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts
And dusty purlieus of the law[38].
O joy to him in this retreat,
Inmantled in ambrosial dark,
To drink the cooler air, and mark
The landscape winking thro' the heat:
O sound to rout the brood of cares,
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,
The gust that round the garden flew,
And tumbled half the mellowing pears!
O bliss, when all in circle drawn
About him, heart and ear were fed
To hear him, as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets[39] on the lawn:
Or in the all-golden afternoon
A guest, or happy sister, sung,
Or here she brought the harp and flung
A ballad to the brightening moon:
Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
And break the livelong summer day
With banquet in the distant woods;
Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
Discuss'd the books to love or hate,
Or touch'd the changes of the state,
Or threaded some Socratic dream;
But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For 'ground in yonder social mill
We rub each other's angles down,
'And merge,' he said, 'in form and gloss
The picturesque of man and man.'
We talk'd: the stream beneath us ran,
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,
Or cool'd within the glooming wave;
And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fall'n into her father's grave,
And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
We heard behind the woodbine veil
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honied hours.

38. After leaving Cambridge, Hallam became a law student in London.
39. Dante and Petrarch.

XCIII

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay?
No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is numb;
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.
O, therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in unconjectured bliss,
O, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,
Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to name;
That in this blindness of the frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIV

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.
In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all.
They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest:
But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates
And hear the household jar within.

XCV

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry;
And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn;
And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd:

The brook alone far-off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn[40]:
   And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;
   While now we sang old songs that peal'd
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,
The white kine[41] glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.
   But when those others, one by one,
Withdrew themselves from me and night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,
   A hunger seized my heart; I read
Of that glad year which once had been,
In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,
The noble letters of the dead:
   And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words, and strange
Was love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth; and strangely spoke
   The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell
On doubts that drive the coward back,
And keen thro' wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.
   So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touch'd me from the past,
And all at once it seem'd at last
The living soul was flash'd on mine,
   And mine in his was wound, and whirl'd
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,
   Aeonian music[42] measuring out
The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—
The blows of Death. At length my trance
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.
   Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame
In matter-moulded forms of speech,
Or ev'n for intellect to reach
Thro' memory that which I became:
   Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,

40. Vessel for boiling water for tea or coffee.
41. Cows.
42. Age-old music.

The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field;
And suck'd from out the distant gloom
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,
And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said,
'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away;
And East and West, without a breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.
I know not: one[43] indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true:
Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.
He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them: thus he came at length
To find a stronger faith his own;
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,
But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinai's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of gold,
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

XCIX

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again[44],
So loud with voices of the birds,

43. Hallam.
44. September 15, 1835, the second anniversary of Hallam's death.

So thick with lowings of the herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men;
Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red
On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the past,
And woodlands holy to the dead;
Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
A song that slights the coming care,
And Autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves;
Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.
O, wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
To-day they count as kindred souls;
They know me not, but mourn with me.

CIV

The time draws near the birth of Christ[45];
The moon is hid, the night is still;
A single church[46] below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist.
A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know[47].
Like strangers' voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other days,
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

CV

To-night ungather'd let us leave
This laurel, let this holly stand:
We live within the stranger's land,
And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.
Our father's dust is left alone
And silent under other snows:
There in due time the woodbine blows,
The violet comes, but we are gone.
No more shall wayward grief abuse

45. The third Christmas since Hallam's death.
46. Waltham Abbey.
47. Tennyson's family has moved to a new home in Epping, Surrey, where they spent their first Christmas in 1837, four years after Hallam's death.

The genial hour with mask and mime,
For change of place, like growth of time,
Has broke the bond of dying use.
Let cares that petty shadows cast,
By which our lives are chiefly proved,
A little spare the night I loved,
And hold it solemn to the past.
But let no footstep beat the floor,
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;
For who would keep an ancient form
Thro' which the spirit breathes no more?
Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown;
No dance, no motion, save alone
What lightens in the lucid east
Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
Long sleeps the summer in the seed;
Run out your measured arcs, and lead
The closing cycle rich in good.

CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die[48].
Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.
Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.
Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.
Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.
Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;

48. New Year's resolutions. Tennyson is determined "to re-shape his attitude to Hallam's death: 'let him die….Year by year, Tennyson's cause has been to keep Hallam's memory alive; all of a sudden, he sounds resolved to let his memory fade in the comforting knowledge that he lives forever in Christ' ('Ring in the Christ that is meant to be')" (Cash 9).

Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.
   Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.
   Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVII

   It is the day when he was born[49],
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.
   The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,
   And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
Above the wood which grides and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns
   Together, in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass;
   Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things ev'n as he were by;
   We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVIII

   I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:
   What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, tho' with might

49. February 1, Hallam's birthday.

To scale the heaven's highest height,
Or dive below the wells of Death?
What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?
And on the depths of death there swims
The reflex of a human face.
I'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies:
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now burgeons every maze of quick[50]
About the flowering squares[51], and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.
Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drown'd in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.
Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea;
Where now the seamew[52] pipes, or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood; that live their lives
From land to land; and in my breast
Spring wakens too; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXVII

O days and hours, your work is this
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss:
That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet;
And unto meeting when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue,
For every grain of sand that runs,

50. Hawthorn hedge.
51. Fields.
52. Seabird.

And every span of shade that steals,
And every kiss of toothed wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.

CXVIII

Contèmplate all this work of Time[53],
The giant labouring in his youth;
Nor dream of human love and truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime[54];
But trust that those we call the dead
Are breathers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends. They[55] say,
The solid earth whereon we tread
In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random forms,
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man;
Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,
The herald of a higher race,
And of himself in higher place,
If so he type[56] this work of time
Within himself, from more to more;
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
Like glories, move his course, and show
That life is not as idle ore,
But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And batter'd with the shocks of doom
To shape and use. Arise and fly
The reeling Faun[57], the sensual feast;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

CXIX

Doors[58], where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, not as one that weeps
I come once more; the city sleeps;
I smell the meadow in the street;
I hear a chirp of birds; I see
Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn

53. The Titan giant Cronus (Saturn) regarded as the god of devouring time.
54. Do not dream that love and fidelity are merely transient things.
55. Scientists.
56. Prefigures.
57. Faunus. Also Pan, Roman god of country life, half-beast, half man.
58. The doors of Hallam's London house at 67 Wimpole Street, to which Tennyson has returned.

A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,
And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
And bright the friendship of thine eye;
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath:
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries[59]; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death;
Not only cunning casts in clay:
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matters Science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.
Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape
His action like the greater ape,
But I was born to other things.

CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.
The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.
But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true;
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIV

That which we dare invoke to bless;
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
He, They, One, All; within, without;
The Power in darkness whom we guess,—
I found Him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye[60],
Nor thro' the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun.

59. Automatons.
60. Tennyson rejects the argument of God's existence from the design of nature and hence the need for a designer.

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
I heard a voice 'believe no more,'
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep,
A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.'
No, like a child in doubt and fear:
But that blind clamour made me wise;
Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near;
And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.
What art thou then? I cannot guess;
But tho' I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less.
My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now;
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.
Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice;
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI

O living will[61] that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock[62],
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,
That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquer'd years
To one that with us works, and trust,
With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved

61. Tennyson equated this with "Free-will, the higher and enduring part of man" (*Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir*, I, 319).
62. Christ. cf. 1 Corinthians: 10.4

Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

[from Epilogue[63]]
...And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
Till over down and over dale
All night the shining vapour sail
And pass the silent-lighted town,
The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
And catch at every mountain head,
And o'er the friths that branch and spread
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;
And touch with shade the bridal doors,
With tender gloom the roof, the wall;
And breaking let the splendour fall
To spangle all the happy shores
By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
And, star and system rolling past,
A soul shall draw from out the vast
And strike his being into bounds,
And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
Result in man, be born and think,
And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race
Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
On knowledge, under whose command
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
Is Nature like an open book;
No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and did,
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit;
Whereof the man, that with me trod
This planet, was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God,
That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.
—1833-50, 1850

63. The poem comes full circle with a description of the wedding of Tennyson's sister Cecilia to Edward Lushington and to the birth which will result from their union.

19.

The Charge of the Light Brigade

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
'Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns' he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
'Forward, the Light Brigade!'
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldiers knew
Some one had blunder'd:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.
Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turned in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army while
All the world wonder'd:
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.

Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.
   Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.
   When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred!

20.

Crossing the Bar

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

*Hallam Tennyson gives this account of the writing of this hymn:"'Crossing the Bar,' was written…on a day in October [1889] when we came from Aldworth to Farringford. Before reaching Farringford he had the moaning of the bay in his mind, and after dinner he showed me this poem written out. I said, 'That is the crown of your life's work.' He answered, 'It came in a moment.' He explained the 'Pilot' as 'That Divine and Unseen Who is always guiding us.' … A few days before my father's death [1892] he said to me, 'Mind you put "Crossing the Bar" at the end of all editions of my poems…'" (*Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir*, II, 366).*

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call[1] for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar[2],
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne[3] of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.
—1889

1. A summons to duty, here that of God.
2. A bar is a sandbank across a harbour mouth. Charles Kingsley, in his poem "The Three Fishers," refers to the common estuary in Barnstaple Bay, where the joining of two rivers and the incoming sea produces a loud moaning sound.
3. Life on Earth.

21.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

The Lady of Shalott

The original 1833 published version next to 1842 revised version

"The Man Behind the Lady." An interesting exhibit about "The Lady of Shalott," with several paintings on the subject.

1. After looking at both published versions of the poem, might you, as did George Eliot, express a preference for any of the original lines, published in 1833? If so, which ones would you wish Tennyson had not revised?
2. What are features of the poem's meter and diction? How do these add to the magical or eerie effect?
3. What might the striking image of the tower symbolize? the mirror? What is significant about the lady's being enclosed in a high tower?
4. What was the result of Sir Lancelot's adulterous relationship with King Arthur's queen, Guinevere?
5. What irony is associated with Lancelot?
6. After looking at the link above—isolate some details that support the contention that the poem deals with "the Woman Question"; that is, the position of Victorian women?
7. What details might support an allegorical interpretation pertaining to art versus life?
8. Why do you think the Lady of Shalott became the subject of so many Victorian paintings (Hunt, Rossetti, Waterhouse)? First, see the link above: "The Man Behind the Lady."
9. Listen to Loreena McKennitt's musical adaptation of "The Lady of Shalott,"

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?p=236

QR Code Lady of Shalott

Short Essay Topics

1. Houghton and Stange interpret the poem as an allegory about art versus life: that the artist must remain in aloof detachment, observing life only in the mirror of the imagination, not mixing in it directly. Once the artist attempts to lead the life of ordinary men, his poetic gift, it would seem, dies. Do you agree or disagree with this interpretation?
2. Does "The Lady of Shalott" address the "Woman Question"? Does it uphold patriarchal assumptions about gender relationships as in, say, the words of the king in Tennyson's *The Princess: A Medley*, published in 1847, five years after the appearance of the revised version of "The Lady of Shalott"?:

    Man for the field and woman for the hearth: Man for the sword and for the needle she:
    Man with the head and woman with the heart: Man to command and woman to obey;
    All else confusion. ("The Princess," V, 427–31)

The Lotos-Eaters

1. Are the first two lines meant to be a commentary on the rest of the poem?
2. Who is the "he" of line 1?
3. What is the dominant rhyme scheme in the many 9-line stanzas? Compare this pattern with that of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Book II, canto 6 (Phaedria's Isle and Lake of Idleness.)
4. Give examples of sibilance, onomatopoeia, repeated masculine end rhymes, sensuous imagery. What is their effect?
5. Why do the Lotos-Eaters wish to resemble the gods? What aspects of divinity do they project onto these deities? How might a Victorian reader have been expected to react to this notion of "godhead," and how would this have affected his or her view of the Lotus-Eaters' choice?
6. The second stanza of the choric Song (sung by the mariners who had eaten of the lotos): "We only toil, who are the first of things" (ll. 57-69) recalls similar lines in *F.Q.*, II, Canto 6, Stanza 17, "Why then dost thou, O Man, that of them all/Art lord…" What point is being made in both poems?

7. In what ways do both "The Lotos-Eaters" and Spenser's *F.Q.*, II, Canto 6 invite comparison/ contrast with parts of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:25-34, especially "Take… no thought for the morrow" (34), which is echoed in Tennyson's l. "…takes no care" in l. 73 of "The Lotos-Eaters"?
8. How do you interpret the mariners' complaint in the Choric Song, VI: "Is there confusion in the little isle? Let what is broken so remain. . . 'Tis hard to settle order once again." Is this line referring to Britain? Is the line ironic?
9. What is the poem's theme? Contrast this poem with "Ulysses"?

Ulysses

1. Tennyson is quoted as saying that "Ulysses" was "written soon after Arthur Hallam's death, and gave my feeling about the need of going forward, and braving the struggle of life perhaps more simply than anything in 'In Memoriam'" (*Memoir*, I, 196). To which section of "In Memoriam" is "Ulysses" most parallel?
2. Some critics argue that the poem is not wholly a dramatic monologue. Looking at it section by section (i.e., ll. 1–32; ll. 33–43, and ll. 44–70), which section is most clearly a dramatic monologue?
3. In a short essay, compare and contrast "The Lotos-Eaters" and "Ulysses."

Break, Break, Break

1. What feelings of loss does the speaker feel?
2. How does the speaker's state of mind contrast with those of the fisherman's boy and the sailor lad?
3. How do the breaking waves symbolize the speaker's melancholy?

From the Princess

See Princess Ida – from Tennyson to Gilbert

1. Read the relevant portion of the table that contrasts Tennyson's poem and W.S. Gilbert's "per-version" of the poem (i.e., Pt VII). Do you agree with the author's assessment of Tennyson's view of the relations between the sexes—"often cited as a key text in debates about Victorian constructs of masculinity and femininity?" [*NAEL*, 9, 1184].
2. In what way is Gilbert's "per-version" of "The Princess" just that, in terms of theme?

In Memoriam

1. Download Gatty's *A Key to In Memoriam* as well as a searchable Project Gutenberg e-text of *In Memoriam:*

  - A Key to Lord Tennyson's 'In Memoriam' by Alfred Gatty
  - *In Memoriam*

1. In her excellent notes on *In Memoriam*, Professor Florence Boos states, "According to Tennyson, the poem fell naturally into the following 10 sections, with 1–77; 78–103; and 104–131 forming the three main sections:
    - Sections 1–8, ending with a sense of hope; 9–20, ending with a sense of hope; 21–27, ending with a sense of hope; 28–49, ending with a sense of despair; 50–58; 59–71; 72–98; 99–103; 104–131; Epilogue.
2. Find examples to support the following assertion. "Whereas the first Christmas (28–77) was marked overwhelmingly by grief, the second cycle (78–103) beginning with the second Christmas since Hallam's death, marks a turning point in the poem, as from here on the poet begins to move more steadily towards hope and consolation". Compare sections 30 and 78, as well as 7 and 119, in particular.
3. Look in a glossary of literary terms and then find examples of **anaphora** in Parts 11 and 101.
4. The *Cambridge History of English Literature* (CHEL), (XIII, II, 3) states that Ben Jonson and Lord Herbert of Cherbury used the so-called "In Memoriam stanza" before Tennyson. Find one example of Jonson's and Lord Herbert of Cherbury's use of the "In Memoriam stanza." See Edward Hirsch, *A Poet's Glossary* (Google books). See also Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir*, I, 305 for Tennyson's own discussion of what is now known as the "In Memoriam stanza." Be sure to use quotes before and after your search terms when using the "search inside" box inside the *Memoir*.

Essay Topics

1. Focus on sections 75, 87, 89, 95, 107, and 109–114 to discuss Tennyson's characterization of Hallam.
2. Does Tennyson move beyond the bleakness of the survival of the fittest view of the universe in 55 and 56? What does he offer to contradict the vision of a seemingly purposeless universe?
3. Analyze section 118 as a kind of key to the science versus religion aspect of the poem.
4. Compare elegiac elements in *In Memoriam* and either one of the following elegies: Milton's "Lycidas"; Shelley's "Adonais", Matthew Arnold's "Thyrsis." **Essay Topic on Tennyson and Imperialism**
5. Read Tennyson's 106-line poem, "The Defence of Lucknow", written in 1879. In an essay, discuss whether you think Tennyson avoids the larger ethical questions underlying European Imperialism and instead gives in to typical Victorian imperialist sentiments.

Resources

In Memoriam

- Numerous articles from Victorian Web on *In Memoriam*
- BBC Radio *In Our Time* “In Memoriam”

The Charge of the Light Brigade

- The Times/1854/News/The Charge of the Light Brigade
- BBC Radio *In Our Time* “Charge of the Light Brigade”

V

Charles Dickens (1812–1870)

22.

Biography

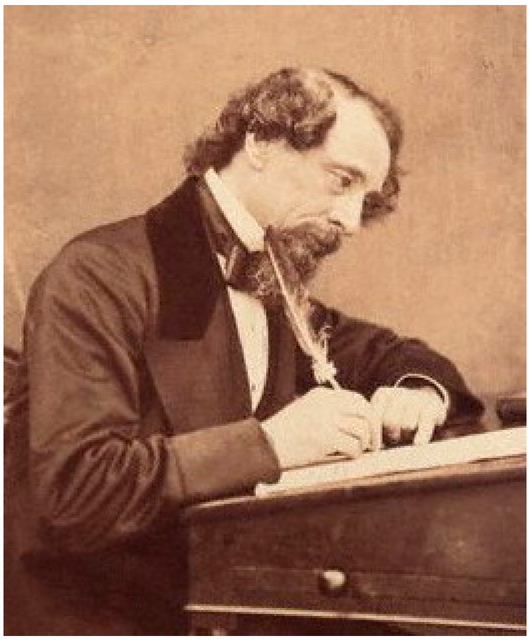


Figure 1: Charles Dickens.

Charles John Huffam Dickens was born in Landport, Portsmouth, England, on February 7, 1812. Charles was the second of eight children to John Dickens (1786–1851), a clerk in the Navy Pay Office, and his wife Elizabeth Dickens (1789–1863). The Dickens family moved to London in 1814 and two years later to Chatham, Kent, where Charles spent early years of his childhood. Due to financial difficulties, they moved back to London in 1822, where they settled in Camden Town, a poor neighborhood of London.

The defining moment of Dickens's life occurred when he was 12 years old. His father, who had a difficult time managing money and was constantly in debt, was imprisoned in the Marshalsea debtor's prison in 1824. Consequently, Charles was withdrawn from school and forced to work in a warehouse that handled "blacking" or shoe polish to help support the family. This experience left profound psychological and sociological effects on Charles. It gave him a firsthand acquaintance with poverty and made him the most vigorous and influential voice of the working classes of his time.

After a few months, Dickens's father was released from prison and Charles was allowed to go back to school. At age 15, his formal education ended and he found employment as an office boy at a law office. During this time, he studied shorthand at night, and from 1830 he worked as a shorthand reporter in the courts and afterwards as a parliamentary and newspaper reporter.

In 1833, Dickens began to contribute short stories and essays to periodicals. "A Dinner at Popular Walk" was Dickens's first published story. It appeared in the *Monthly Magazine* in December 1833. In 1834, still a newspaper reporter, he adopted the soon-to-be famous pseudonym Boz. Dickens's first book, a collection of stories titled *Sketches by Boz*, was published in 1836. In the same year, he married

Catherine Hogarth, daughter of the editor of the *Evening Chronicle*. Together they had 10 children before they separated in 1858.

Although Dickens's main profession was as a novelist, he continued his journalistic work until the end of his life, editing *The Daily News*, *Household Words*, and *All the Year Round*. His connections to various magazines and newspapers gave him the opportunity to begin publishing his own fiction at the beginning of his career.

The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club was published in monthly parts from April 1836 to November 1837. *Pickwick* became one of the most popular works of the time, continuing to be so after it was published in book form in 1837. After the success of *Pickwick*, Dickens embarked on a full-time career as a novelist, producing work of increasing complexity at an incredible rate: *Oliver Twist* (1837–39), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838–39), *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and *Barnaby Rudge* as part of the *Master Humphrey's Clock* series (1840–41), all being published in monthly installments before being made into books.

In 1842, he travelled with his wife to the United States and Canada, which led to his publishing the controversial *American Notes* (1842), which is the basis of some of the episodes in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Dickens's series of five Christmas Books were soon to follow: *A Christmas Carol* (1843), *The Chimes* (1844), *The Cricket on the Hearth* (1845), *The Battle of Life* (1846), and *The Haunted Man* (1848). After living briefly abroad in Italy (1844) and Switzerland (1846), Dickens continued his success with *Dombey and Son* (1848), the largely autobiographical *David Copperfield* (1849-50), *Bleak House* (1852-53), *Hard Times* (1854), *Little Dorrit* (1857), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), and *Great Expectations* (1861).

In 1856 his success allowed him to buy Gad's Hill Place, an estate he had admired since childhood. In 1858 Dickens began a series of paid readings, which became instantly popular. In all, Dickens performed more than 400 times. In that year, after a long period of difficulties, he separated from his wife. It was also around that time that Dickens became involved in an affair with a young actress named Ellen Ternan. The exact nature of their relationship is unclear, but it was clearly central to Dickens's personal and professional life.

In the closing years of his life Dickens worsened his declining health by giving numerous readings. During his readings in 1869 he collapsed, showing symptoms of mild stroke. He retreated to Gad's Hill and began to work on *Edwin Drood*, which was never completed.

Charles Dickens died at home on June 9, 1870, after suffering a stroke. Contrary to his wish to be buried in Rochester Cathedral, he was laid to rest in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey. The inscription on his tomb reads:

"He was a sympathiser to the poor, the suffering, and the oppressed; and by his death, one of England's greatest writers is lost to the world."

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23.

A Christmas Carol: Stave 1

Charles Dickens

Marley's Ghost

Marley was dead, to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it. And Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change[1], for anything he chose to put his hand to.

Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

Mind! I don't mean to say that I know, of my own knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a door-nail. I might have been inclined, myself, to regard a coffin-nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile; and my unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the Country's done for. You will therefore permit me to repeat, emphatically, that Marley was as dead as a door-nail.

Scrooge knew he was dead? Of course he did. How could it be otherwise? Scrooge and he were partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was his sole executor, his sole administrator, his sole assign, his sole residuary legatee, his sole friend, and sole mourner. And even Scrooge was not so dreadfully cut up by the sad event, but that he was an excellent man of business on the very day of the funeral, and solemnised it with an undoubted bargain.

The mention of Marley's funeral brings me back to the point I started from. There is no doubt that Marley was dead. This must be distinctly understood, or nothing wonderful can come of the story I am going to relate. If we were not perfectly convinced that Hamlet's Father died before the play began, there would be nothing more remarkable in his taking a stroll at night, in an easterly wind, upon his own ramparts, than there would be in any other middle-aged gentleman rashly turning out after dark in a breezy spot – say Saint Paul's Churchyard for instance – literally to astonish his son's weak mind.

Scrooge never painted out Old Marley's name. There it stood, years afterwards, above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley. The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names. It was all the same to him.

Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

1. "Change": a place of (financial or commercial) exchange, as in the King's or Queen's Exchange (1601); a money changer's office (1569); the "Burse" or Exchange built in London by Sir Thomas Gresham in 1566 received from Queen Elizabeth I the name of the Royal Exchange.

External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often came down[2] handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, 'My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?' No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place, of Scrooge. Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, 'No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!'

But what did Scrooge care? It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call 'nuts'[3] to Scrooge.

Once upon a time – of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve – old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house. It was cold, bleak, biting weather: foggy withal: and he could hear the people in the court outside, go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them. The city clocks had only just gone three, but it was quite dark already – it had not been light all day – and candles were flaring in the windows of the neighbouring offices, like ruddy smears upon the palpable brown air. The fog came pouring in at every chink and keyhole, and was so dense without, that although the court was of the narrowest, the houses opposite were mere phantoms. To see the dingy cloud come drooping down, obscuring everything, one might have thought that Nature lived hard by, and was brewing on a large scale.

The door of Scrooge's counting-house[4] was open that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn't replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of a strong imagination, he failed.

'A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!' cried a cheerful voice. It was the voice of Scrooge's nephew, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.

'Bah!' said Scrooge, 'Humbug[5]!'

He had so heated himself with rapid walking in the fog and frost, this nephew of Scrooge's, that he was all in a glow; his face was ruddy and handsome; his eyes sparkled, and his breath smoked again.

'Christmas a humbug, uncle!' said Scrooge's nephew. 'You don't mean that, I am sure?'

'I do,' said Scrooge. 'Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough.'

'Come, then,' returned the nephew gaily. 'What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough.'

Scrooge having no better answer ready on the spur of the moment, said, 'Bah!' again; and followed it up with 'Humbug!'

'Don't be cross, uncle,' said the nephew.

'What else can I be,' returned the uncle, 'when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry

2. "to come down": slang, "to give money."
3. "nuts to someone": slang, a source of pleasure.
4. The office in which the accounts and money of a business are kept.
5. A hoax or sham.

Christmas! Out upon merry Christmas. What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books and having every item in them through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will,' said Scrooge indignantly,'every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!'

'Uncle!' pleaded the nephew.

'Nephew!' returned the uncle, sternly, 'keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine.'

'Keep it!' repeated Scrooge's nephew. 'But you don't keep it.'

'Let me leave it alone, then,' said Scrooge. 'Much good may it do you! Much good it has ever done you!'

'There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say,' returned the nephew. 'Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round– apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that–as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!'

The clerk in the tank involuntarily applauded. Becoming immediately sensible of the impropriety, he poked the fire, and extinguished the last frail spark for ever.

'Let me hear another sound from you,' said Scrooge, 'and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation[6]! You're quite a powerful speaker, sir,' he added, turning to his nephew. 'I wonder you don't go into Parliament.

'Don't be angry, uncle. Come! Dine with us tomorrow.'

Scrooge said that he would see him–yes, indeed he did. He went the whole length of the expression, and said that he would see him in that extremity first.

'But why?' cried Scrooge's nephew. 'Why?'

'Why did you get married?' said Scrooge.

'Because I fell in love.'

'Because you fell in love!' growled Scrooge, as if that were the only one thing in the world more ridiculous than a merry Christmas. 'Good afternoon!'

'Nay, uncle, but you never came to see me before that happened. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?'

'Good afternoon,' said Scrooge.

'I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you; why cannot we be friends?'

'Good afternoon,' said Scrooge.

'I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrel, to which I have been a party. But I have made the trial in homage to Christmas, and I'll keep my Christmas humour to the last. So A Merry Christmas, uncle!'

'Good afternoon.' said Scrooge.

'And A Happy New Year!'

'Good afternoon!' said Scrooge.

His nephew left the room without an angry word, notwithstanding. He stopped at the outer door to

6. Job, position.

bestow the greeting of the season on the clerk, who, cold as he was, was warmer than Scrooge; for he returned them cordially.

'There's another fellow,' muttered Scrooge; who overheard him: 'my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam.'[7]

The clerk, in letting Scrooge's nephew out, had let two other people in. They were portly gentlemen, pleasant to behold, and now stood, with their hats off, in Scrooge's office. They had books and papers in their hands, and bowed to him.

'Scrooge and Marley's, I believe,' said one of the gentlemen, referring to his list. 'Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr Scrooge, or Mr Marley?'

'Mr Marley has been dead these seven years,' Scrooge replied. 'He died seven years ago, this very night.'

'We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner,' said the gentleman, presenting his credentials.

It certainly was, for they had been two kindred spirits. At the ominous word liberality, Scrooge frowned, and shook his head, and handed the credentials back.

'At this festive season of the year, Mr Scrooge,' said the gentleman, taking up a pen, 'it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the Poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessaries; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.'

'Are there no prisons?' asked Scrooge.

'Plenty of prisons,' said the gentleman, laying down the pen again.

'And the Union workhouses.[8]' demanded Scrooge. 'Are they still in operation?'

'They are. Still,' returned the gentleman,' I wish I could say they were not.'

'The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then?' said Scrooge.

'Both very busy, sir.'

'Oh. I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course,' said Scrooge. 'I'm very glad to hear it.'

'Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude,' returned the gentleman, 'a few of us are endeavouring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?'

'Nothing!' Scrooge replied.

'You wish to be anonymous?'

'I wish to be left alone,' said Scrooge. 'Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned–they cost enough; and those who are badly off must go there.'

'Many can't go there; and many would rather die.'

'If they would rather die,' said Scrooge, 'they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population[9]. Besides–excuse me–I don't know that.'

7. A lunatic hospital endowed by Henry VIII in 1547, derived from St. Mary of Bethlehem Hospital, which took in lunatics as early as 1377.
8. Under the *Poor Law Amendment Act* of 1834, workhouses for the reception of the destitute were set up by 21 administrative districts in England and Wales. Notorious for denying civil liberties, they often separated family members and destroyed human dignity. As a result, most of the poorest people went to great lengths to avoid this degrading solution.
9. Since the first appearance of Thomas Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* in 1803, concern grew that Britain had too many mouths to feed. See Malthus: "A man who is born into a world already possessed, if he cannot get subsistence from his parents, on whom he has a just demand, and if society do not want his labour, has no claim of *right* to the smallest portion of food, and, in fact, has no business to be where he is. At nature's mighty feast there is no vacant cover for him. She tells him to be gone…"(503).

'But you might know it,' observed the gentleman.

'It's not my business,' Scrooge returned. 'It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!'

Seeing clearly that it would be useless to pursue their point, the gentlemen withdrew. Scrooge resumed his labours with an improved opinion of himself, and in a more facetious temper than was usual with him.

Meanwhile the fog and darkness thickened so, that people ran about with flaring links, proffering their services to go before horses in carriages, and conduct them on their way. The ancient tower of a church, whose gruff old bell was always peeping slily down at Scrooge out of a gothic window in the wall, became invisible, and struck the hours and quarters in the clouds, with tremulous vibrations afterwards as if its teeth were chattering in its frozen head up there. The cold became intense. In the main street, at the corner of the court, some labourers were repairing the gas-pipes, and had lighted a great fire in a brazier, round which a party of ragged men and boys were gathered: warming their hands and winking their eyes before the blaze in rapture. The water-plug being left in solitude, its overflowing sullenly congealed, and turned to misanthropic ice. The brightness of the shops where holly sprigs and berries crackled in the lamp heat of the windows, made pale faces ruddy as they passed. Poulterers' and grocers' trades became a splendid joke: a glorious pageant, with which it was next to impossible to believe that such dull principles as bargain and sale had anything to do. The Lord Mayor, in the stronghold of the might Mansion House, gave orders to his fifty cooks and butlers to keep Christmas as a Lord Mayor's household should; and even the little tailor, whom he had fined five shillings on the previous Monday for being drunk and bloodthirsty in the streets, stirred up tomorrow's pudding in his garret, while his lean wife and the baby sallied out to buy the beef.

Foggier yet, and colder. Piercing, searching, biting cold. If the good Saint Dunstan[10] had but nipped the Evil Spirit's nose with a touch of such weather as that, instead of using his familiar weapons, then indeed he would have roared to lusty purpose. The owner of one scant young nose, gnawed and mumbled by the hungry cold as bones are gnawed by dogs, stooped down at Scrooge's keyhole to regale him with a Christmas carol: but at the first sound of

'God bless you, merry gentleman.

May nothing you dismay!'

Scrooge seized the ruler with such energy of action, that the singer fled in terror, leaving the keyhole to the fog and even more congenial frost.

At length the hour of shutting up the counting-house arrived. With an ill-will Scrooge dismounted from his stool, and tacitly admitted the fact to the expectant clerk in the Tank, who instantly snuffed his candle out, and put on his hat.

'You'll want all day tomorrow, I suppose?' said Scrooge.

'If quite convenient, sir.'

'It's not convenient,' said Scrooge, 'and it's not fair. If I was to stop half-a-crown for it, you'd think yourself ill-used, I'll be bound?'

The clerk smiled faintly.

'And yet,' said Scrooge, 'you don't think me ill-used, when I pay a day's wages for no work.'

The clerk observed that it was only once a year.

'A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December!' said Scrooge, buttoning his great-coat to the chin. 'But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning.'

The clerk promised that he would; and Scrooge walked out with a growl. The office was closed in

10. St. Dunstan (924-988). Patron saint of smiths. Legend recounts that he clamped red hot tongs on the devil's nose.

a twinkling, and the clerk, with the long ends of his white comforter dangling below his waist (for he boasted no great-coat), went down a slide on Cornhill, at the end of a lane of boys, twenty times, in honour of its being Christmas Eve, and then ran home to Camden Town as hard as he could pelt, to play at blindman's buff.

Scrooge took his melancholy dinner in his usual melancholy tavern; and having read all the newspapers, and beguiled the rest of the evening with his banker's-book, went home to bed. He lived in chambers which had once belonged to his deceased partner. They were a gloomy suite of rooms, in a lowering pile of building up a yard, where it had so little business to be, that one could scarcely help fancying it must have run there when it was a young house, playing at hide-and-seek with other houses, and forgotten the way out again. It was old enough now, and dreary enough, for nobody lived in it but Scrooge, the other rooms being all let out as offices. The yard was so dark that even Scrooge, who knew its every stone, was fain to grope with his hands. The fog and frost so hung about the black old gateway of the house, that it seemed as if the Genius of the Weather sat in mournful meditation on the threshold.

Now, it is a fact, that there was nothing at all particular about the knocker on the door, except that it was very large. It is also a fact, that Scrooge had seen it, night and morning, during his whole residence in that place; also that had as little of what is called fancy[11] about him as any man in the city of London, even including–which is a bold word–the corporation, aldermen, and livery. Let it also be borne in mind that Scrooge had not bestowed one thought on Marley, since his last mention of his seven-year's dead partner that afternoon. And then let any man explain to me, if he can, how it happened that Scrooge, having his key in the lock of the door, saw in the knocker, without its undergoing any intermediate process of change-not a knocker, but Marley's face.

Marley's face. It was not in impenetrable shadow as the other objects in the yard were, but had a dismal light about it, like a bad lobster in a dark cellar. It was not angry or ferocious, but looked at Scrooge as Marley used to look: with ghostly spectacles turned up on its ghostly forehead. The hair was curiously stirred, as if by breath or hot air; and, though the eyes were wide open, they were perfectly motionless. That, and its livid colour, made it horrible; but its horror seemed to be in spite of the face and beyond its control, rather than a part of its own expression.

As Scrooge looked fixedly at this phenomenon, it was a knocker again.

To say that he was not startled, or that his blood was not conscious of a terrible sensation to which it had been a stranger from infancy, would be untrue. But he put his hand upon the key he had relinquished, turned it sturdily, walked in, and lighted his candle.

He *did* pause, with a moment's irresolution, before he shut the door; and he *did* look cautiously behind it first, as if he half expected to be terrified with the sight of Marley's pigtail sticking out into the hall. But there was nothing on the back of the door, except the screws and nuts that held the knocker on, so he said 'Pooh, pooh,' and closed it with a bang.

The sound resounded through the house like thunder. Every room above, and every cask in the wine-merchant's cellars below, appeared to have a separate peal of echoes of its own. Scrooge was not a man to be frightened by echoes. He fastened the door, and walked across the hall, and up the stairs; slowly too: trimming his candle as he went.

You may talk vaguely about driving a coach-and-six up a good old flight of stairs, or through a bad young Act of Parliament; but I mean to say you might have got a hearse up that staircase, and taken it broadwise, with the splinter-bar towards the wall and the door towards the balustrades: and done it easy. There was plenty of width for that, and room to spare; which is perhaps the reason why Scrooge thought

11. Imagination. In *Hard Times* (1854), Dickens's satire on the overly materialistic philosophy of certain political economists, fancy was discouraged in favour of facts. See esp., *HT*, I, 2.

he saw a locomotive hearse going on before him in the gloom. Half-a-dozen gas-lamps out of the street wouldn't have lighted the entry too well, so you may suppose that it was pretty dark with Scrooge's dip.

Up Scrooge went, not caring a button for that. Darkness is cheap, and Scrooge liked it. But before he shut his heavy door, he walked through his rooms to see that all was right. He had just enough recollection of the face to desire to do that.

Sitting-room, bed-room, lumber-room[12]. All as they should be. Nobody under the table, nobody under the sofa; a small fire in the grate; spoon and basin ready; and the little saucepan of gruel (Scrooge has a cold in his head) upon the hob. Nobody under the bed; nobody in the closet'; nobody in his dressing-gown, which was hanging up in a suspicious attitude against the wall. Lumber-room as usual. Old fire-guard, old shoes, two fish-baskets, washing-stand on three legs, and a poker.

Quite satisfied, he closed his door, and locked himself in; double-locked himself in, which was not his custom. Thus secured against surprise, he took off his cravat; put on his dressing-gown and slippers, and his nightcap; and sat down before the fire to take his gruel.

It was a very low fire indeed; nothing on such a bitter night. He was obliged to sit close to it, and brood over it, before he could extract the least sensation of warmth from such a handful of fuel. The fireplace was an old one, built by some Dutch merchant long ago, and paved all round with quaint Dutch tiles, designed to illustrate the Scriptures. There were Cains and Abels, Pharaoh's daughters, Queens of Sheba, Angelic messengers descending through the air on clouds like feather-beds, Abrahams, Belshazzars, Apostles putting off to sea in butter-boats[13], hundreds of figures to attract his thoughts; and yet that face of Marley, seven years dead, came like the ancient Prophet's rod[14], and swallowed up the whole. If each smooth tile had been a blank at first, with power to shape some picture on its surface from the disjointed fragments of his thoughts, there would have been a copy of old Marley's head on every one.

'Humbug!' said Scrooge; and walked across the room.

After several turns, he sat down again. As he threw his head back in the chair, his glance happened to rest upon a bell, a disused bell, that hung in the room, and communicated for some purpose now forgotten with a chamber in the highest story of the building. It was with great astonishment, and with a strange, inexplicable dread, that as he looked, he saw this bell begin to swing. It swung so softly in the outset that it scarcely made a sound; but soon it rang out loudly, and so did every bell in the house.

This might have lasted half a minute, or a minute, but it seemed an hour. The bells ceased as they had begun, together. They were succeeded by a clanking noise, deep down below; as if some person were dragging a heavy chain over the casks in the wine-merchant's cellar. Scrooge then remembered to have heard that ghosts in haunted houses were described as dragging chains.

The cellar-door flew open with a booming sound, and then he heard the noise much louder, on the floors below; then coming up the stairs; then coming straight towards his door.

'It's humbug still!' said Scrooge. 'I won't believe it.'

His colour changed though, when, without a pause, it came on through the heavy door, and passed into the room before his eyes. Upon its coming in, the dying flame leaped up, as though it cried, 'I know him; Marley's Ghost!' and fell again.

The same face: the very same. Marley in his pigtail, usual waistcoat, tights and boots; the tassels on the latter bristling, like his pigtail, and his coat-skirts, and the hair upon his head. The chain he drew was clasped about his middle. It was long, and wound about him like a tail; and it was made (for Scrooge observed it closely) of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel.

12. A room where disused or bulky items are kept.
13. A three-piece porcelain container that used water to keep butter soft and spreadable.
14. A reference to Exodus 7:12 in which Aaron's rod, transformed into a serpent, swallowed up all the serpents produced by the magicians of the Pharoah.

His body was transparent; so that Scrooge, observing him, and looking through his waistcoat, could see the two buttons on his coat behind.

Scrooge had often heard it said that Marley had no bowels, but he had never believed it until now.

No, nor did he believe it even now. Though he looked the phantom through and through, and saw it standing before him; though he felt the chilling influence of its death-cold eyes; and marked the very texture of the folded kerchief bound about its head and chin, which wrapper he had not observed before; he was still incredulous, and fought against his senses.

'How now.' said Scrooge, caustic and cold as ever. 'What do you want with me?'

'Much.'–Marley's voice, no doubt about it.

'Who are you?'

'Ask me who I *was*.'

'Who *were* you then?' said Scrooge, raising his voice. 'You're particular, for a shade.' He was going to say '*to* a shade,' but substituted this, as more appropriate.

'In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.'

'Can you–can you sit down?' asked Scrooge, looking doubtfully at him.

'I can.'

'Do it, then.'

Scrooge asked the question, because he didn't know whether a ghost so transparent might find himself in a condition to take a chair; and felt that in the event of its being impossible, it might involve the necessity of an embarrassing explanation. But the ghost sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace, as if he were quite used to it.

'You don't believe in me,' observed the Ghost.

'I don't,' said Scrooge.

'What evidence would you have of my reality beyond that of your senses?'

'I don't know,' said Scrooge.

'Why do you doubt your senses?'

'Because,' said Scrooge, 'a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!'

Scrooge was not much in the habit of cracking jokes, nor did he feel, in his heart, by any means waggish then. The truth is, that he tried to be smart, as a means of distracting his own attention, and keeping down his terror; for the spectre's voice disturbed the very marrow in his bones.

To sit, staring at those fixed glazed eyes, in silence for a moment, would play, Scrooge felt, the very deuce with him. There was something very awful, too, in the spectre's being provided with an infernal atmosphere of its own. Scrooge could not feel it himself, but this was clearly the case; for though the Ghost sat perfectly motionless, its hair, and skirts, and tassels, were still agitated as by the hot vapour from an oven.

'You see this toothpick.' said Scrooge, returning quickly to the charge, for the reason just assigned; and wishing, though it were only for a second, to divert the vision's stony gaze from himself.

'I do,' replied the Ghost.

'You are not looking at it,' said Scrooge.

'But I see it,' said the Ghost, 'notwithstanding.'

'Well.' returned Scrooge, 'I have but to swallow this, and be for the rest of my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all of my own creation. Humbug, I tell you, humbug!'

At this the spirit raised a frightful cry, and shook its chain with such a dismal and appalling noise, that Scrooge held on tight to his chair, to save himself from falling in a swoon. But how much greater was his

horror, when the phantom taking off the bandage round its head, as if it were too warm to wear in-doors, its lower jaw dropped down upon its breast.

Scrooge fell upon his knees, and clasped his hands before his face.

'Mercy!' he said. 'Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?' 'Man of the worldly mind!' replied the Ghost, 'do you believe in me or not?'

'I do,' said Scrooge. 'I must. But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?'

'It is required of every man,' the Ghost returned, 'that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow-men, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world–oh, woe is me!–and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness.'

Again the spectre raised a cry, and shook its chain and wrung its shadowy hands.

'You are fettered,' said Scrooge, trembling. 'Tell me why?'

'I wear the chain I forged in life,' replied the Ghost. 'I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to *you*?'

Scrooge trembled more and more.

'Or would you know,' pursued the Ghost, 'the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas Eves ago. You have laboured on it, since. It is a ponderous chain!'

Scrooge glanced about him on the floor, in the expectation of finding himself surrounded by some fifty or sixty fathoms of iron cable: but he could see nothing.

'Jacob,' he said, imploringly. 'Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob.'

'I have none to give,' the Ghost replied. 'It comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is conveyed by other ministers, to other kinds of men. Nor can I tell you what I would. A very little more is all permitted to me. I cannot rest, I cannot stay, I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond out counting-house–mark me!– in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me.'

It was a habit with Scrooge, whenever he became thoughtful, to put his hands in his breeches pockets. Pondering on what the Ghost had said, he did so now, but without lifting up his eyes, or getting off his knees.

'You must have been very slow about it, Jacob,' Scrooge observed, in a business-like manner, though with humility and deference.

'Slow!' the Ghost repeated.

'Seven years dead,' mused Scrooge. 'And travelling all the time?'

'The whole time,' said the Ghost. 'No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse.'

'You travel fast?' said Scrooge.

'On the wings of the wind,' replied the Ghost.

'You might have got over a great quantity of ground in seven years,' said Scrooge.

The Ghost, on hearing this, set up another cry, and clanked its chain so hideously in the dead silence of the night, that the Ward[15] would have been justified in indicting it for a nuisance.

'Oh! captive, bound, and double-ironed,' cried the phantom, 'not to know, that ages of incessant labour by immortal creatures, for this earth must pass into eternity before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed! Not to know that any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness! Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunity misused! Yet such was I! Oh! such was I!'

15. A patrolman employed by the ward or administrative division of a town or city.

‘But you were always a good man of business, Jacob,’ faltered Scrooge, who now began to apply this to himself.

‘Business!’ cried the Ghost, wringing its hands again. ‘Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!’

It held up its chain at arm’s length, as if that were the cause of all its unavailing grief, and flung it heavily upon the ground again.

‘At this time of the rolling year,’ the spectre said, ‘I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed Star which led the Wise Men[16] to a poor abode? Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted me?’

Scrooge was very much dismayed to hear the spectre going on at this rate, and began to quake exceedingly.

‘Hear me!’ cried the Ghost. ‘My time is nearly gone.’

‘I will,’ said Scrooge. ‘But don’t be hard upon me. Don’t be flowery, Jacob! Pray!’

‘How it is that I appear before you in a shape that you can see, I may not tell. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day.’

It was not an agreeable idea. Scrooge shivered, and wiped the perspiration from his brow.

‘That is no light part of my penance,’ pursued the Ghost. ‘I am here to-night to warn you, that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer.’

‘You were always a good friend to me,’ said Scrooge. ‘Thank’ee.’

‘You will be haunted,’ resumed the Ghost, ‘by Three Spirits.’

Scrooge’s countenance fell almost as low as the Ghost’s had done.

‘Is that the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?’ he demanded, in a faltering voice.

‘It is.’

‘I–I think I’d rather not,’ said Scrooge.

‘Without their visits,’ said the Ghost, ‘you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first to-morrow, when the bell tolls One.’

‘Couldn’t I take them all at once, and have it over, Jacob?’ hinted Scrooge.

‘Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third upon the next night when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more; and look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us!’

When it had said these words, the spectre took its wrapper from the table, and bound it round its head, as before. Scrooge knew this, by the smart sound its teeth made, when the jaws were brought together by the bandage. He ventured to raise his eyes again, and found his supernatural visitor confronting him in an erect attitude, with its chain wound over and about its arm.

The apparition walked backward from him; and at every step it took, the window raised itself a little, so that when the spectre reached it, it was wide open.

It beckoned Scrooge to approach, which he did. When they were within two paces of each other, Marley’s Ghost held up its hand, warning him to come no nearer. Scrooge stopped.

Not so much in obedience, as in surprise and fear: for on the raising of the hand, he became sensible of confused noises in the air; incoherent sounds of lamentation and regret; wailings inexpressibly sorrowful and self-accusatory. The spectre, after listening for a moment, joined in the mournful dirge; and floated out upon the bleak, dark night.

Scrooge followed to the window: desperate in his curiosity. He looked out.

The air was filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they

16. cf. Matthew 2: 1-3.

went. Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost; some few (they might be guilty governments) were linked together; none were free.

Many had been personally known to Scrooge in their lives. He had been quite familiar with one old ghost, in a white waistcoat, with a monstrous iron safe attached to its ankle, who cried piteously at being unable to assist a wretched woman with an infant, whom it saw below, upon a door-step. The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever.

Whether these creatures faded into mist, or mist enshrouded them, he could not tell. But they and their spirit voices faded together; and the night became as it had been when he walked home.

Scrooge closed the window, and examined the door by which the Ghost had entered. It was double-locked, as he had locked it with his own hands, and the bolts were undisturbed. He tried to say 'Humbug!' but stopped at the first syllable. And being, from the emotion he had undergone, or the fatigues of the day, or his glimpse of the Invisible World, or the dull conversation of the Ghost, or the lateness of the hour, much in need of repose; went straight to bed, without undressing, and fell asleep upon the instant.

24.

A Christmas Carol: Stave 2

Charles Dickens

The First of the Three Spirits

When Scrooge awoke, it was so dark, that looking out of bed, he could scarcely distinguish the transparent window from the opaque walls of his chamber. He was endeavouring to pierce the darkness with his ferret eyes, when the chimes of a neighbouring church struck the four quarters. So he listened for the hour.

To his great astonishment the heavy bell went on from six to seven, and from seven to eight, and regularly up to twelve; then stopped. Twelve! It was past two when he went to bed. The clock was wrong. An icicle must have got into the works. Twelve!

He touched the spring of his repeater[1], to correct this most preposterous clock. Its rapid little pulse beat twelve: and stopped.

'Why, it isn't possible,' said Scrooge, 'that I can have slept through a whole day and far into another night. It isn't possible that anything has happened to the sun, and this is twelve at noon!'

The idea being an alarming one, he scrambled out of bed, and groped his way to the window. He was obliged to rub the frost off with the sleeve of his dressing-gown before he could see anything; and could see very little then. All he could make out was, that it was still very foggy and extremely cold, and that there was no noise of people running to and to and fro, and making a great stir, as there unquestionably would have been if night had beaten off bright day, and taken possession of the world. This was a great relief, because "Three days after sight of this First of Exchange pay to Mr. Ebenezer Scrooge or his order," and so forth, would have become a mere United States security[2] if there were no days to count by.

Scrooge went to bed again, and thought, and thought, and thought it over and over, and could make nothing of it. The more he thought, the more perplexed he was; and, the more he endeavoured not to think, the more he thought.

Marley's Ghost bothered him exceedingly. Every time he resolved within himself, after mature inquiry, that it was all a dream, his mind flew back again, like a strong spring released, to its first position, and presented the same problem to be worked all through, 'Was it a dream or not?'

Scrooge lay in this state until the chime had gone three quarters more, when he remembered, on a sudden, that the Ghost had warned him of a visitation when the bell tolled one. He resolved to lie awake until the hour was passed; and, considering that he could no more go to sleep than go to Heaven, this was, perhaps, the wisest resolution in his power.

The quarter was so long, that he was more than once convinced he must have sunk into a doze unconsciously, and missed the clock. At length it broke upon his listening ear.

'Ding, dong!'

1. Watch.
2. In 1837, many individual states had to default on loans from English lenders.

'A quarter past,' said Scrooge, counting.

'Ding, dong!'

'Half-past!' said Scrooge.

'Ding, dong!'

'A quarter to it,' said Scrooge.

'Ding, dong!'

'The hour itself,' said Scrooge triumphantly, 'and nothing else!'

He spoke before the hour bell sounded, which it now did with a deep, dull, hollow, melancholy One. Light flashed up in the room upon the instant, and the curtains of his bed were drawn.

The curtains of his bed were drawn aside, I tell you, by a hand. Not the curtains at his feet, nor the curtains at his back, but those to which his face was addressed. The curtains of his bed were drawn aside; and Scrooge, starting up into a half-recumbent attitude, found himself face to face with the unearthly visitor who drew them: as close to it as I am now to you, and I am standing in the spirit at your elbow.

It was a strange figure–like a child: yet not so like a child as like an old man, viewed through some supernatural medium, which gave him the appearance of having receded from the view, and being diminished to a child's proportions. Its hair, which hung about its neck and down its back, was white as if with age; and yet the face had not a wrinkle in it, and the tenderest bloom was on the skin. The arms were very long and muscular; the hands the same, as if its hold were of uncommon strength. Its legs and feet, most delicately formed, were, like those upper members, bare. It wore a tunic of the purest white; and round its waist was bound a lustrous belt, the sheen of which was beautiful. It held a branch of fresh green holly in its hand; and, in singular contradiction of that wintry emblem, had its dress trimmed with summer flowers. But the strangest thing about it was, that from the crown of its head there sprung a bright clear jet of light, by which all this was visible; and which was doubtless the occasion of its using, in its duller moments, a great extinguisher[3] for a cap, which it now held under its arm.

Even this, though, when Scrooge looked at it with increasing steadiness, was not its strangest quality. For as its belt sparkled and glittered now in one part and now in another, and what was light one instant, at another time was dark, so the figure itself fluctuated in its distinctness: being now a thing with one arm, now with one leg, now with twenty legs, now a pair of legs without a head, now a head without a body: of which dissolving parts, no outline would be visible in the dense gloom wherein they melted away. And in the very wonder of this, it would be itself again; distinct and clear as ever.

'Are you the Spirit, sir, whose coming was foretold to me?' asked Scrooge.

'I am.'

The voice was soft and gentle. Singularly low, as if instead of being so close beside him, it were at a distance.

'Who, and what are you?' Scrooge demanded.

'I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.'

'Long Past?' inquired Scrooge: observant of its dwarfish stature.

'No. Your past.'

Perhaps, Scrooge could not have told anybody why, if anybody could have asked him; but he had a special desire to see the Spirit in his cap; and begged him to be covered.

'What!' exclaimed the Ghost, 'would you so soon put out, with worldly hands, the light I give. Is it not enough that you are one of those whose passions made this cap, and force me through whole trains of years to wear it low upon my brow?'

Scrooge reverently disclaimed all intention to offend or any knowledge of having wilfully

3. Candle snuffer.

bonneted[4] the Spirit at any period of his life. He then made bold to inquire what business brought him there.

'Your welfare!' said the Ghost.

Scrooge expressed himself much obliged, but could not help thinking that a night of unbroken rest would have been more conducive to that end. The Spirit must have heard him thinking, for it said immediately:

'Your reclamation, then. Take heed!'

It put out its strong hand as it spoke, and clasped him gently by the arm.

'Rise! and walk with me!'

It would have been in vain for Scrooge to plead that the weather and the hour were not adapted to pedestrian purposes; that bed was warm, and the thermometer a long way below freezing; that he was clad but lightly in his slippers, dressing-gown, and nightcap; and that he had a cold upon him at that time. The grasp, though gentle as a woman's hand, was not to be resisted. He rose: but finding that the Spirit made towards the window, clasped his robe in supplication.

'I am mortal,' Scrooge remonstrated, 'and liable to fall.'

'Bear but a touch of my hand there,' said the Spirit, laying it upon his heart, 'and you shall be upheld in more than this!'

As the words were spoken, they passed through the wall, and stood upon an open country road, with fields on either hand. The city had entirely vanished. Not a vestige of it was to be seen. The darkness and the mist had vanished with it, for it was a clear, cold, winter day, with snow upon the ground.

'Good Heaven!' said Scrooge, clasping his hands together, as he looked about him. 'I was bred in this place. I was a boy here!'

The Spirit gazed upon him mildly. Its gentle touch, though it had been light and instantaneous, appeared still present to the old man's sense of feeling. He was conscious of a thousand odours floating in the air, each one connected with a thousand thoughts, and hopes, and joys, and cares long, long, forgotten.

'Your lip is trembling,' said the Ghost. 'And what is that upon your cheek?'

Scrooge muttered, with an unusual catching in his voice, that it was a pimple; and begged the Ghost to lead him where he would.

'You recollect the way?' inquired the Spirit.

'Remember it!' cried Scrooge with fervour; ' I could walk it blindfold.'

'Strange to have forgotten it for so many years!' observed the Ghost. 'Let us go on.'

They walked along the road, Scrooge recognising every gate, and post, and tree; until a little market-town appeared in the distance, with its bridge, its church, and winding river. Some shaggy ponies now were seen trotting towards them with boys upon their backs, who called to other boys in country gigs and carts, driven by farmers. All these boys were in great spirits, and shouted to each other, until the broad fields were so full of merry music, that the crisp air laughed to hear it.

'These are but shadows of the things that have been,' said the Ghost. 'They have no consciousness of us.'

The jocund travellers came on; and as they came, Scrooge knew and named them every one. Why was he rejoiced beyond all bounds to see them? Why did his cold eye glisten, and his heart leap up as they went past? Why was he filled with gladness when he heard them give each other Merry Christmas, as they parted at cross-roads and bye-ways, for their several homes? What was merry Christmas to Scrooge? Out upon merry Christmas! What good had it ever done to him?

4. To crush down a person's hat over his or her eyes.

‘The school is not quite deserted,’ said the Ghost. ‘A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still.’

Scrooge said he knew it. And he sobbed.

They left the high-road, by a well-remembered lane, and soon approached a mansion of dull red brick, with a little weathercock-surmounted cupola, on the roof, and a bell hanging in it. It was a large house, but one of broken fortunes; for the spacious offices were little used, their walls were damp and mossy, their windows broken, and their gates decayed. Fowls clucked and strutted in the stables; and the coach-houses and sheds were over-run with grass. Nor was it more retentive of its ancient state, within; for entering the dreary hall, and glancing through the open doors of many rooms, they found them poorly furnished, cold, and vast. There was an earthy savour in the air, a chilly bareness in the place, which associated itself somehow with too much getting up by candle-light, and not too much to eat.

They went, the Ghost and Scrooge, across the hall, to a door at the back of the house. It opened before them, and disclosed a long, bare, melancholy room, made barer still by lines of plain deal forms and desks. At one of these a lonely boy was reading near a feeble fire; and Scrooge sat down upon a form, and wept to see his poor forgotten self as he used to be.

Not a latent echo in the house, not a squeak and scuffle from the mice behind the panelling, not a drip from the half-thawed water-spout in the dull yard behind, not a sigh among the leafless boughs of one despondent poplar, not the idle swinging of an empty store-house door, no, not a clicking in the fire, but fell upon the heart of Scrooge with a softening influence, and gave a freer passage to his tears.

The Spirit touched him on the arm, and pointed to his younger self, intent upon his reading. Suddenly a man, in foreign garments: wonderfully real and distinct to look at: stood outside the window, with an axe stuck in his belt, and leading by the bridle an ass laden with wood.

‘Why, it’s Ali Baba[5]!’ Scrooge exclaimed in ecstasy. ‘It’s dear old honest Ali Baba! Yes, yes, I know. One Christmas time, when yonder solitary child was left here all alone, he did come, for the first time, just like that. Poor boy! And Valentine,’ said Scrooge, ‘and his wild brother, Orson[6]; there they go! And what’s his name, who was put down in his drawers, asleep, at the Gate of Damascus; don’t you see him? And the Sultan’s Groom turned upside down by the Genii; there he is upon his head! Serve him right! I’m glad of it. What business had he to be married to the Princess?[7]’

To hear Scrooge expending all the earnestness of his nature on such subjects, in a most extraordinary voice between laughing and crying; and to see his heightened and excited face; would have been a surprise to his business friends in the city, indeed.

‘There’s the Parrot!’ cried Scrooge. ‘Green body and yellow tail, with a thing like a lettuce growing out of the top of his head; there he is! Poor Robin Crusoe, he called him, when he came home again after sailing round the island. ‘Poor Robin Crusoe, where have you been, Robin Crusoe?’ The man thought he was dreaming, but he wasn’t. It was the Parrot, you know. There goes Friday, running for his life to the little creek! Halloa! Hoop! Hallo!’

Then, with a rapidity of transition very foreign to his usual character, he said, in pity for his former self, ‘Poor boy!’ and cried again.

‘I wish,’ Scrooge muttered, putting his hand in his pocket, and looking about him, after drying his eyes with his cuff: ‘but it’s too late now.’

‘What is the matter?’ asked the Spirit.

‘Nothing,’ said Scrooge. ‘Nothing. There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something: that’s all.’

The Ghost smiled thoughtfully, and waved its hand: saying as it did so, ‘Let us see another Christmas!’

5. Hero of a story in the *Arabian Nights*.

6. Valentine and Orson were the main characters in an old French romance.

7. Further characters from *Arabian Nights* (“Noureddin Ali of Cairo and His Son Bedreddin Hassan”).

Scrooge's former self grew larger at the words, and the room became a little darker and more dirty. The panels shrunk, the windows cracked; fragments of plaster fell out of the ceiling, and the naked laths were shown instead; but how all this was brought about, Scrooge knew no more than you do. He only knew that it was quite correct; that everything had happened so; that there he was, alone again, when all the other boys had gone home for the jolly holidays.

He was not reading now, but walking up and down despairingly. Scrooge looked at the Ghost, and with a mournful shaking of his head, glanced anxiously towards the door.

It opened; and a little girl, much younger than the boy, came darting in, and putting her arms about his neck, and often kissing him, addressed him as her 'Dear, dear brother.'

'I have come to bring you home, dear brother!' said the child, clapping her tiny hands, and bending down to laugh. 'To bring you home, home, home!'

'Home, little Fan?' returned the boy.

'Yes!' said the child, brimful of glee. 'Home, for good and all. Home, for ever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home's like Heaven! He spoke so gently to me one dear night when I was going to bed, that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home; and he said Yes, you should; and sent me in a coach to bring you. And you're to be a man!' said the child, opening her eyes, 'and are never to come back here; but first, we're to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world.'

'You are quite a woman, little Fan!' exclaimed the boy.

She clapped her hands and laughed, and tried to touch his head; but being too little, laughed again, and stood on tiptoe to embrace him. Then she began to drag him, in her childish eagerness, towards the door; and he, nothing loth to go, accompanied her.

A terrible voice in the hall cried. 'Bring down Master Scrooge's box, there!' and in the hall appeared the schoolmaster himself, who glared on Master Scrooge with a ferocious condescension, and threw him into a dreadful state of mind by shaking hands with him. He then conveyed him and his sister into the veriest old well of a shivering best-parlour that ever was seen, where the maps upon the wall, and the celestial and terrestrial globes in the windows, were waxy with cold. Here he produced a decanter of curiously light wine, and a block of curiously heavy cake, and administered instalments of those dainties to the young people: at the same time, sending out a meagre servant to offer a glass of something to the postboy, who answered that he thanked the gentleman, but if it was the same tap as he had tasted before, he had rather not. Master Scrooge's trunk being by this time tied on to the top of the chaise, the children bade the schoolmaster good-bye right willingly; and getting into it, drove gaily down the garden-sweep[8]: the quick wheels dashing the hoar-frost and snow from off the dark leaves of the evergreens like spray.

'Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered,' said the Ghost. 'But she had a large heart.'

'So she had,' cried Scrooge. 'You're right. I will not gainsay it, Spirit. God forbid!'

'She died a woman,' said the Ghost, 'and had, as I think, children.'

'One child,' Scrooge returned.

'True,' said the Ghost. 'Your nephew.'

Scrooge seemed uneasy in his mind; and answered briefly, 'Yes.'

Although they had but that moment left the school behind them, they were now in the busy thoroughfares of a city, where shadowy passengers passed and repassed; where shadowy carts and coaches battle for the way, and all the strife and tumult of a real city were. It was made plain enough, by the dressing of the shops, that here too it was Christmas time again; but it was evening, and the streets were lighted up.

8. A carriage driveway through a garden.

The Ghost stopped at a certain warehouse door, and asked Scrooge if he knew it.

'Know it!' said Scrooge. 'Was I apprenticed here?'

They went in. At sight of an old gentleman in a Welsh wig[9], sitting behind such a high desk, that if he had been two inches taller he must have knocked his head against the ceiling, Scrooge cried in great excitement:

'Why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it's Fezziwig alive again!'

Old Fezziwig laid down his pen, and looked up at the clock, which pointed to the hour of seven. He rubbed his hands; adjusted his capacious waistcoat; laughed all over himself, from his shoes to his organ of benevolence[10]; and called out in a comfortable, oily, rich, fat, jovial voice:

'Yo ho, there! Ebenezer! Dick!'

Scrooge's former self, now grown a young man, came briskly in, accompanied by his fellow-prentice.

'Dick Wilkins, to be sure.' said Scrooge to the Ghost. 'Bless me, yes. There he is. He was very much attached to me, was Dick. Poor Dick. Dear, dear.'

'Yo ho, my boys!' said Fezziwig. 'No more work to-night. Christmas Eve, Dick. Christmas, Ebenezer! Let's have the shutters up,' cried old Fezziwig, with a sharp clap of his hands, 'before a man can say Jack Robinson!'

You wouldn't believe how those two fellows went at it! They charged into the street with the shutters–one, two, three–had them up in their places-four, five, six–barred them and pinned 'em–seven, eight, nine–and came back before you could have got to twelve, panting like race-horses.

'Hilli-ho!' cried old Fezziwig, skipping down from the high desk, with wonderful agility. 'Clear away, my lads, and let's have lots of room here! Hilli-ho, Dick! Chirrup, Ebenezer!'

Clear away! There was nothing they wouldn't have cleared away, or couldn't have cleared away, with old Fezziwig looking on. It was done in a minute. Every movable was packed off, as if it were dismissed from public life for evermore; the floor was swept and watered, the lamps were trimmed, fuel was heaped upon the fire; and the warehouse was as snug, and warm, and dry, and bright a ball-room, as you would desire to see upon a winter's night.

In came a fiddler with a music-book, and went up to the lofty desk, and made an orchestra of it, and tuned like fifty stomach-aches. In came Mrs Fezziwig, one vast substantial smile. In came the three Miss Fezziwigs, beaming and lovable. In came the six young followers whose hearts they broke. In came all the young men and women employed in the business. In came the housemaid, with her cousin, the baker. In came the cook, with her brother's particular friend, the milkman. In came the boy from over the way, who was suspected of not having board enough from his master; trying to hide himself behind the girl from next door but one, who was proved to have had her ears pulled by her mistress. In they all came, one after another; some shyly, some boldly, some gracefully, some awkwardly, some pushing, some pulling; in they all came, anyhow and everyhow. Away they all went, twenty couple at once; hands half round and back again the other way; down the middle and up again; round and round in various stages of affectionate grouping; old top couple always turning up in the wrong place; new top couple starting off again, as soon as they got there; all top couples at last, and not a bottom one to help them. When this result was brought about, old Fezziwig, clapping his hands to stop the dance, cried out, 'Well done,' and the fiddler plunged his hot face into a pot of porter, especially provided for that purpose. But scorning rest, upon his reappearance, he instantly began again, though there were no dancers yet, as if the other fiddler had been carried home, exhausted, on a shutter, and he were a bran-new man resolved to beat him out of sight, or perish.

There were more dances, and there were forfeits, and more dances, and there was cake, and there was

9. A close-fitting woollen cap.
10. Top of the head, according to phrenology, a pseudo-science that purported to be able to determine one's character based on the shape of the skull.

negus[11], and there was a great piece of Cold Roast, and there was a great piece of Cold Boiled, and there were mince-pies, and plenty of beer. But the great effect of the evening came after the Roast and Boiled, when the fiddler (an artful dog, mind. The sort of man who knew his business better than you or I could have told it him!) struck up 'Sir Roger de Coverley.[12]' Then old Fezziwig stood out to dance with Mrs Fezziwig. Top couple, too; with a good stiff piece of work cut out for them; three or four and twenty pair of partners; people who were not to be trifled with; people who *would* dance, and had no notion of walking.

But if they had been twice as many–ah, four times– old Fezziwig would have been a match for them, and so would Mrs Fezziwig. As to *her*, she was worthy to be his partner in every sense of the term. If that's not high praise, tell me higher, and I'll use it. A positive light appeared to issue from Fezziwig's calves. They shone in every part of the dance like moons. You couldn't have predicted, at any given time, what would have become of them next. And when old Fezziwig and Mrs Fezziwig had gone all through the dance; advance and retire, both hands to your partner, bow and curtsey, corkscrew, thread-the-needle, and back again to your place; Fezziwig 'cut'[13]—cut so deftly, that he appeared to wink with his legs, and came upon his feet again without a stagger.

When the clock struck eleven, this domestic ball broke up. Mr and Mrs Fezziwig took their stations, one on either side of the door, and shaking hands with every person individually as he or she went out, wished him or her a Merry Christmas. When everybody had retired but the two prentices, they did the same to them; and thus the cheerful voices died away, and the lads were left to their beds; which were under a counter in the back-shop.

During the whole of this time, Scrooge had acted like a man out of his wits. His heart and soul were in the scene, and with his former self. He corroborated everything, remembered everything, enjoyed everything, and underwent the strangest agitation. It was not until now, when the bright faces of his former self and Dick were turned from them, that he remembered the Ghost, and became conscious that it was looking full upon him, while the light upon its head burnt very clear.

'A small matter,' said the Ghost, 'to make these silly folks so full of gratitude.'

'Small!' echoed Scrooge.

The Spirit signed to him to listen to the two apprentices, who were pouring out their hearts in praise of Fezziwig: and when he had done so, said,

'Why! Is it not? He has spent but a few pounds of your mortal money: three or four perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves this praise?'

'It isn't that,' said Scrooge, heated by the remark, and speaking unconsciously like his former, not his latter, self. 'It isn't that, Spirit. He has the power to render us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. Say that his power lies in words and looks; in things so slight and insignificant that it is impossible to add and count them up: what then? The happiness he gives, is quite as great as if it cost a fortune.'

He felt the Spirit's glance, and stopped.

'What is the matter?' asked the Ghost.

'Nothing in particular,' said Scrooge.

'Something, I think?' the Ghost insisted.

'No,' said Scrooge, 'No. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now. That's all.'

His former self turned down the lamps as he gave utterance to the wish; and Scrooge and the Ghost again stood side by side in the open air.

'My time grows short,' observed the Spirit. 'Quick!'

11. A punch made of sweetened wine, hot water, spices, and lemon.
12. The name of an English country dance.
13. A leap in the air while wiggling the legs back and forth before descending.

This was not addressed to Scrooge, or to any one whom he could see, but it produced an immediate effect. For again Scrooge saw himself. He was older now; a man in the prime of life. His face had not the harsh and rigid lines of later years; but it had begun to wear the signs of care and avarice. There was an eager, greedy, restless motion in the eye, which showed the passion that had taken root, and where the shadow of the growing tree would fall.

He was not alone, but sat by the side of a fair young girl in a mourning-dress: in whose eyes there were tears, which sparkled in the light that shone out of the Ghost of Christmas Past.

'It matters little,' she said, softly. 'To you, very little. Another idol has displaced me; and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve.'

'What Idol has displaced you?' he rejoined.

'A golden one.'

'This is the even-handed dealing of the world.' he said. 'There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!'

'You fear the world too much,' she answered, gently. 'All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its sordid reproach. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you. Have I not?'

'What then?' he retorted. 'Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? I am not changed towards you.'

She shook her head.

'Am I?'

'Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so, until, in good season, we could improve our worldly fortune by our patient industry. You are changed. When it was made, you were another man.'

'I was a boy,' he said impatiently.

'Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are,' she returned. 'I am. That which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I *have* thought of it, and can release you.'

'Have I ever sought release?'

'In words. No. Never.'

'In what, then?'

'In a changed nature; in an altered spirit; in another atmosphere of life; another Hope as its great end. In everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. If this had never been between us,' said the girl, looking mildly, but with steadiness, upon him; 'tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now. Ah, no!'

He seemed to yield to the justice of this supposition, in spite of himself. But he said with a struggle, 'You think not.'

'I would gladly think otherwise if I could,' she answered, 'Heaven knows! When I have learned a Truth like this, I know how strong and irresistible it must be. But if you were free to-day, to-morrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a dowerless girl–you who, in your very confidence with her, weigh everything by Gain: or, choosing her, if for a moment you were false enough to your one guiding principle to do so, do I not know that your repentance and regret would surely follow? I do; and I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were.'

He was about to speak; but with her head turned from him, she resumed.

'You may–the memory of what is past half makes me hope you will–have pain in this. A very, very brief time, and you will dismiss the recollection of it, gladly, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke. May you be happy in the life you have chosen!'

She left him, and they parted.

'Spirit!' said Scrooge, 'show me no more! Conduct me home. Why do you delight to torture me?'

'One shadow more!' exclaimed the Ghost.

'No more!' cried Scrooge. 'No more, I don't wish to see it. Show me no more!'

But the relentless Ghost pinioned him in both his arms, and forced him to observe what happened next.

They were in another scene and place; a room, not very large or handsome, but full of comfort. Near to the winter fire sat a beautiful young girl, so like that last that Scrooge believed it was the same, until he saw *her*, now a comely matron, sitting opposite her daughter. The noise in this room was perfectly tumultuous, for there were more children there, than Scrooge in his agitated state of mind could count; and, unlike the celebrated herd in the poem[14], they were not forty children conducting themselves like one, but every child was conducting itself like forty. The consequences were uproarious beyond belief; but no one seemed to care; on the contrary, the mother and daughter laughed heartily, and enjoyed it very much; and the latter, soon beginning to mingle in the sports, got pillaged by the young brigands most ruthlessly. What would I not have given to one of them! Though I never could have been so rude, no, no! I wouldn't for the wealth of all the world have crushed that braided hair, and torn it down; and for the precious little shoe, I wouldn't have plucked it off, God bless my soul. to save my life. As to measuring her waist in sport, as they did, bold young brood, I couldn't have done it; I should have expected my arm to have grown round it for a punishment, and never come straight again. And yet I should have dearly liked, I own, to have touched her lips; to have questioned her, that she might have opened them; to have looked upon the lashes of her downcast eyes, and never raised a blush; to have let loose waves of hair, an inch of which would be a keepsake beyond price: in short, I should have liked, I do confess, to have had the lightest licence of a child, and yet to have been man enough to know its value.

But now a knocking at the door was heard, and such a rush immediately ensued that she with laughing face and plundered dress was borne towards it the centre of a flushed and boisterous group, just in time to greet the father, who came home attended by a man laden with Christmas toys and presents. Then the shouting and the struggling, and the onslaught that was made on the defenceless porter! The scaling him with chairs for ladders to dive into his pockets, despoil him of brown-paper parcels, hold on tight by his cravat, hug him round his neck, pommel his back, and kick his legs in irrepressible affection! The shouts of wonder and delight with which the development of every package was received! The terrible announcement that the baby had been taken in the act of putting a doll's frying-pan into his mouth, and was more than suspected of having swallowed a fictitious turkey, glued on a wooden platter! The immense relief of finding this a false alarm! The joy, and gratitude, and ecstasy! They are all indescribable alike. It is enough that by degrees the children and their emotions got out of the parlour, and by one stair at a time, up to the top of the house; where they went to bed, and so subsided.

And now Scrooge looked on more attentively than ever, when the master of the house, having his daughter leaning fondly on him, sat down with her and her mother at his own fireside; and when he thought that such another creature, quite as graceful and as full of promise, might have called him father, and been a spring-time in the haggard winter of his life, his sight grew very dim indeed.

'Belle,' said the husband, turning to his wife with a smile, 'I saw an old friend of yours this afternoon.'

'Who was it?'

'Guess!'

'How can I? Tut, don't I know?' she added in the same breath, laughing as he he laughed. 'Mr Scrooge.'

'Mr Scrooge it was. I passed his office window; and as it was not shut up, and he had a candle inside,

14. An allusion to the first stanza of Wordsworth's poem "Written in March": "The cattle are grazing,/Their heads never raising;/There are forty feeding like one!"

I could scarcely help seeing him. His partner lies upon the point of death, I hear; and there he sat alone. Quite alone in the world, I do believe.'

'Spirit!' said Scrooge in a broken voice, 'remove me from this place.'

'I told you these were shadows of the things that have been,' said the Ghost. 'That they are what they are, do not blame me!'

'Remove me!' Scrooge exclaimed, 'I cannot bear it!'

He turned upon the Ghost, and seeing that it looked upon him with a face, in which in some strange way there were fragments of all the faces it had shown him, wrestled with it.

'Leave me! Take me back! Haunt me no longer!'

In the struggle, if that can be called a struggle in which the Ghost with no visible resistance on its own part was undisturbed by any effort of its adversary, Scrooge observed that its light was burning high and bright; and dimly connecting that with its influence over him, he seized the extinguisher-cap, and by a sudden action pressed it down upon its head.

The Spirit dropped beneath it, so that the extinguisher covered its whole form; but though Scrooge pressed it down with all his force, he could not hide the light, which streamed from under it, in an unbroken flood upon the ground.

He was conscious of being exhausted, and overcome by an irresistible drowsiness; and, further, of being in his own bedroom. He gave the cap a parting squeeze, in which his hand relaxed; and had barely time to reel to bed, before he sank into a heavy sleep.

25.

A Christmas Carol: Stave 3

Charles Dickens

The Second of the Three Spirits

Awaking in the middle of a prodigiously tough snore, and sitting up in bed to get his thoughts together, Scrooge had no occasion to be told that the bell was again upon the stroke of One. He felt that he was restored to consciousness in the right nick of time, for the especial purpose of holding a conference with the second messenger despatched to him through Jacob Marley's intervention. But, finding that he turned uncomfortably cold when he began to wonder which of his curtains this new spectre would draw back, he put them every one aside with his own hands, and lying down again, established a sharp look-out all round the bed. For, he wished to challenge the Spirit on the moment of its appearance, and did not wish to be taken by surprise, and made nervous.

Gentlemen of the free-and-easy sort, who plume themselves on being acquainted with a move or two, and being usually equal to the time-of-day, express the wide range of their capacity for adventure by observing that they are good for anything from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter; between which opposite extremes, no doubt, there lies a tolerably wide and comprehensive range of subjects. Without venturing for Scrooge quite as hardily as this, I don't mind calling on you to believe that he was ready for a good broad field of strange appearances, and that nothing between a baby and rhinoceros would have astonished him very much.

Now, being prepared for almost anything, he was not by any means prepared for nothing; and, consequently, when the Bell struck One, and no shape appeared, he was taken with a violent fit of trembling. Five minutes, ten minutes, a quater of an hour went by, yet nothing came. All this time, he lay upon his bed, the very core and centre of a blaze of ruddy light, which streamed upon it when the clock proclaimed the hour; and which, being only light, was more alarming than a dozen ghosts, as he was powerless to make out what it meant, or would be at; and was sometimes apprehensive that he might be at that very moment an interesting case of spontaneous combustion[1], without having the consolation of knowing it. At last, however, he began to think–as you or I would have thought at first; for it is always the person not in the predicament who knows what ought to have been done in it, and would unquestionably have done it too–at last, I say, he began to think that the source and secret of this ghostly light might be in the adjoining room, from whence, on further tracing it, it seemed to shine. This idea taking full possession of his mind, he got up softly and shuffled in his slippers to the door.

The moment Scrooge's hand was on the lock, a strange voice called him by his name, and bade him enter. He obeyed.

It was his own room. There was no doubt about that. But it had undergone a surprising transformation. The walls and ceiling were so hung with living green, that it looked a perfect grove; from every part of which, bright gleaming berries glistened. The crisp leaves of holly, mistletoe, and ivy reflected back the

1. Self-ignition. Hay and coal can self-ignite, but Dickens claimed that human bodies could do so as well. See the preface to *Bleak House*, in which he states that 30 such cases are on record.

light, as if so many little mirrors had been scattered there; and such a mighty blaze went roaring up the chimney, as that dull petrification of a hearth had never known in Scrooge's time, or Marley's, or for many and many a winter season gone. Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, sucking-pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-puddings, barrels of oysters, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth-cakes[2], and seething bowls of punch, that made the chamber dim with their delicious steam. In easy state upon this couch, there sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see, who bore a glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty's horn, and held it up, high up, to shed its light on Scrooge, as he came peeping round the door.

'Come in!' exclaimed the Ghost. 'Come in! and know me better, man.'

Scrooge entered timidly, and hung his head before this Spirit. He was not the dogged Scrooge he had been; and though the Spirit's eyes were clear and kind, he did not like to meet them.

'I am the Ghost of Christmas Present,' said the Spirit. 'Look upon me!'

Scrooge reverently did so. It was clothed in one simple green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. This garment hung so loosely on the figure, that its capacious breast was bare, as if disdaining to be warded or concealed by any artifice. Its feet, observable beneath the ample folds of the garment, were also bare; and on its head it wore no other covering than a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark brown curls were long and free; free as its genial face, its sparkling eye, its open hand, its cheery voice, its unconstrained demeanour, and its joyful air. Girded round its middle was an antique scabbard; but no sword was in it, and the ancient sheath was eaten up with rust.

'You have never seen the like of me before!' exclaimed the Spirit.

'Never,' Scrooge made answer to it.

'Have never walked forth with the younger members of my family; meaning (for I am very young) my elder brothers born in these later years?' pursued the Phantom.

'I don't think I have,' said Scrooge. 'I am afraid I have not. Have you had many brothers, Spirit?'

'More than eighteen hundred,' said the Ghost.

'A tremendous family to provide for,' muttered Scrooge.

The Ghost of Christmas Present rose.

'Spirit,' said Scrooge submissively, 'conduct me where you will. I went forth last night on compulsion, and I learnt a lesson which is working now. To-night, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it.'

'Touch my robe!'

Scrooge did as he was told, and held it fast.

Holly, mistletoe, red berries, ivy, turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, meat, pigs, sausages, oysters, pies, puddings, fruit, and punch, all vanished instantly. So did the room, the fire, the ruddy glow, the hour of night, and they stood in the city streets on Christmas morning, where (for the weather was severe) the people made a rough, but brisk and not unpleasant kind of music, in scraping the snow from the pavement in front of their dwellings, and from the tops of their houses, whence it was mad delight to the boys to see it come plumping down into the road below, and splitting into artificial little snow-storms.

The house fronts looked black enough, and the windows blacker, contrasting with the smooth white sheet of snow upon the roofs, and with the dirtier snow upon the ground; which last deposit had been ploughed up in deep furrows by the heavy wheels of carts and waggons; furrows that crossed and recrossed each other hundreds of times where the great streets branched off; and made intricate channels, hard to trace in the thick yellow mud and icy water. The sky was gloomy, and the shortest streets were choked up with a dingy mist, half thawed, half frozen, whose heavier particles descended in shower of

2. A decorated cake made for a Twelfth Night (January 5, the eve of Epiphany) celebration.

sooty atoms, as if all the chimneys in Great Britain had, by one consent, caught fire, and were blazing away to their dear hearts' content. There was nothing very cheerful in the climate or the town, and yet was there an air of cheerfulness abroad that the clearest summer air and brightest summer sun might have endeavoured to diffuse in vain.

For, the people who were shovelling away on the housetops were jovial and full of glee; calling out to one another from the parapets, and now and then exchanging a facetious snowball–better-natured missile far than many a wordy jest– laughing heartily if it went right and not less heartily if it went wrong. The poulterers' shops were still half open, and the fruiterers' were radiant in their glory. There were great, round, pot-bellied baskets of chestnuts, shaped like the waistcoats of jolly old gentlemen, lolling at the doors, and tumbling out into the street in their apoplectic opulence. There were ruddy, brown-faced, broad-girthed Spanish Friars, and winking from their shelves in wanton slyness at the girls as they went by, and glanced demurely at the hung-up mistletoe. There were pears and apples, clustered high in blooming pyramids; there were bunches of grapes, made, in the shopkeepers' benevolence to dangle from conspicuous hooks, that people's mouths might water gratis as they passed; there were piles of filberts, mossy and brown, recalling, in their fragrance, ancient walks among the woods, and pleasant shufflings ankle deep through withered leaves; there were Norfolk Biffins[3], squab and swarthy, setting off the yellow of the oranges and lemons, and, in the great compactness of their juicy persons, urgently entreating and beseeching to be carried home in paper bags and eaten after dinner. The very gold and silver fish, set forth among these choice fruits in a bowl, though members of a dull and stagnant-blooded race, appeared to know that there was something going on; and, to a fish, went gasping round and round their little world in slow and passionless excitement.

The Grocers'! oh the Grocers'! nearly closed, with perhaps two shutters down, or one; but through those gaps such glimpses. It was not alone that the scales descending on the counter made a merry sound, or that the twine and roller parted company so briskly, or that the canisters were rattled up and down like juggling tricks, or even that the blended scents of tea and coffee were so grateful to the nose, or even that the raisins were so plentiful and rare, the almonds so extremely white, the sticks of cinnamon so long and straight, the other spices so delicious, the candied fruits so caked and spotted with molten sugar as to make the coldest lookers-on feel faint and subsequently bilious. Nor was it that the figs were moist and pulpy, or that the French plums blushed in modest tartness from their highly-decorated boxes, or that everything was good to eat and in its Christmas dress; but the customers were all so hurried and so eager in the hopeful promise of the day, that they tumbled up against each other at the door, crashing their wicker baskets wildly, and left their purchases upon the counter, and came running back to fetch them, and committed hundreds of the like mistakes, in the best humour possible; while the Grocer and his people were so frank and fresh that the polished hearts with which they fastened their aprons behind might have been their own, worn outside for general inspection, and for Christmas daws[4] to peck at if they chose.

But soon the steeples called good people all, to church and chapel, and away they came, flocking through the streets in their best clothes, and with their gayest faces. And at the same time there emerged from scores of bye-streets, lanes, and nameless turnings, innumerable people, carrying their dinners to the bakers' shops[5]. The sight of these poor revellers appeared to interest the Spirit very much, for he stood with Scrooge beside him in a baker's doorway, and taking off the covers as their bearers passed, sprinkled incense on their dinners from his torch. And it was a very uncommon kind of torch, for once

3. A variety of apple.
4. cf. *Othello*, 1.1. 65-66: "But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve/For daws to peck at." A daw, or jackdaw, is a common black and grey bird.
5. Bakers were forbidden to bake bread on Sundays and holidays, but for a small fee they allowed people to bring meals to be cooked in their bakery ovens.

or twice when there were angry words between some dinner-carriers who had jostled each other, he shed a few drops of water on them from it, and their good humour was restored directly. For they said, it was a shame to quarrel upon Christmas Day. And so it was! God love it, so it was!

In time the bells ceased, and the bakers were shut up; and yet there was a genial shadowing forth of all these dinners and the progress of their cooking, in the thawed blotch of wet above each baker's oven; where the pavement smoked as if its stones were cooking too.

'Is there a peculiar flavour in what you sprinkle from your torch?' asked Scrooge.

'There is. My own.'

'Would it apply to any kind of dinner on this day?' asked Scrooge.

'To any kindly given. To a poor one most.'

'Why to a poor one most?' asked Scrooge.

'Because it needs it most.'

'Spirit?' said Scrooge, after a moment's thought, 'I wonder you, of all the beings in the many worlds about us, should desire to cramp these people's opportunities of innocent enjoyment.'

'I!' cried the Spirit.

'You would deprive them of their means of dining every seventh day[6], often the only day on which they can be said to dine at all,' said Scrooge. 'Wouldn't you?'

'I!' cried the Spirit.

'You seek to close these places on the Seventh Day,' said Scrooge. 'And it comes to the same thing.'

'I seek!' exclaimed the Spirit.

'Forgive me if I am wrong. It has been done in your name, or at least in that of your family,' said Scrooge.

'There are some upon this earth of yours,' returned the Spirit, 'who lay claim to know us, and who do their deeds of passion, pride, ill-will, hatred, envy, bigotry, and selfishness in our name, who are as strange to us and all out kith and kin, as if they had never lived. Remember that, and charge their doings on themselves, not us.'

Scrooge promised that he would; and they went on, invisible, as they had been before, into the suburbs of the town. It was a remarkable quality of the Ghost (which Scrooge had observed at the baker's), that notwithstanding his gigantic size, he could accommodate himself to any place with ease; and that he stood beneath a low roof quite as gracefully and like a supernatural creature, as it was possible he could have done in any lofty hall.

And perhaps it was the pleasure the good Spirit had in showing off this power of his, or else it was his own kind, generous, hearty nature, and his sympathy with all poor men, that led him straight to Scrooge's clerk's; for there he went, and took Scrooge with him, holding to his robe; and on the threshold of the door the Spirit smiled, and stopped to bless Bob Cratchit's dwelling with the sprinkling of his torch. Think of that. Bob had but fifteen bob[7] a-week himself; he pocketed on Saturdays but fifteen copies of his Christian name; and yet the Ghost of Christmas Present blessed his four-roomed house.

Then up rose Mrs Cratchit, Cratchit's wife, dressed out but poorly in a twice-turned gown[8], but brave in ribbons, which are cheap and make a goodly show for sixpence; and she laid the cloth, assisted by Belinda Cratchit, second of her daughters, also brave in ribbons; while Master Peter Cratchit plunged a fork into the saucepan of potatoes, and getting the corners of his monstrous shirt collar (Bob's private property, conferred upon his son and heir in honour of the day) into his mouth, rejoiced to find himself so gallantly attired, and yearned to show his linen in the fashionable Parks. And now two smaller Cratchits,

6. In his pamphlet, "Sunday Under Three Heads," Dickens opposed attempts to pass a Sunday Observance Bill, which would have limited people's right to enjoy leisure activities and to buy bread on Sundays.

7. Slang for one shilling.

8. A worn out and remade dress.

boy and girl, came tearing in, screaming that outside the baker's they had smelt the goose, and known it for their own; and basking in luxurious thoughts of sage and onion, these young Cratchits danced about the table, and exalted Master Peter Cratchit to the skies, while he (not proud, although his collars nearly choked him) blew the fire, until the slow potatoes bubbling up, knocked loudly at the saucepan-lid to be let out and peeled.

'What has ever got your precious father then?' said Mrs Cratchit. 'And your brother, Tiny Tim? And Martha warn't as late last Christmas Day by half-an-hour!'

'Here's Martha, mother!' said a girl, appearing as she spoke.

'Here's Martha, mother!' cried the two young Cratchits. 'Hurrah! There's such a goose, Martha!'

'Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are.' said Mrs Cratchit, kissing her a dozen times, and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her with officious zeal.

'We'd a deal of work to finish up last night,' replied the girl, 'and had to clear away this morning, mother.'

'Well! Never mind so long as you are come,' said Mrs Cratchit. 'Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye!'

'No, no! There's father coming,' cried the two young Cratchits, who were everywhere at once. 'Hide, Martha, hide!'

So Martha hid herself, and in came little Bob, the father, with at least three feet of comforter exclusive of the fringe, hanging down before him; and his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed, to look seasonable; and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Alas for Tiny Tim, he bore a little crutch, and had his limbs supported by an iron frame!

'Why, where's our Martha?' cried Bob Cratchit, looking round.

'Not coming,' said Mrs Cratchit.

'Not coming!' said Bob, with a sudden declension in his high spirits; for he had been Tim's blood horse all the way from church, and had come home rampant. 'Not coming upon Christmas Day!'

Martha didn't like to see him disappointed, if it were only in joke; so she came out prematurely from behind the closet door, and ran into his arms, while the two young Cratchits hustled Tiny Tim, and bore him off into the wash-house, that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper.

'And how did little Tim behave? asked Mrs Cratchit, when she had rallied Bob on his credulity, and Bob had hugged his daughter to his heart's content.

'As good as gold,' said Bob, 'and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see.'

Bob's voice was tremulous when he told them this, and trembled more when he said that Tiny Tim was growing strong and hearty.

His active little crutch was heard upon the floor, and back came Tiny Tim before another word was spoken, escorted by his brother and sister to his stool before the fire; and while Bob, turning up his cuffs–as if, poor fellow, they were capable of being made more shabby–compounded some hot mixture in a jug with gin and lemons, and stirred it round and round and put it on the hob to simmer; Master Peter, and the two ubiquitous young Cratchits went to fetch the goose, with which they soon returned in high procession.

Such a bustle ensued that you might have thought a goose the rarest of all birds; a feathered phenomenon, to which a black swan was a matter of course-and in truth it was something very like it in that house. Mrs Cratchit made the gravy (ready beforehand in a little saucepan) hissing hot; Master Peter mashed the potatoes with incredible vigour; Miss Belinda sweetened up the apple-sauce; Martha dusted the hot plates; Bob took Tiny Tim beside him in a tiny corner at the table; the two young Cratchits set

chairs for everybody, not forgetting themselves, and mounting guard upon their posts, crammed spoons into their mouths, lest they should shriek for goose before their turn came to be helped. At last the dishes were set on, and grace was said. It was succeeded by a breathless pause, as Mrs Cratchit, looking slowly all along the carving-knife, prepared to plunge it in the breast; but when she did, and when the long expected gush of stuffing issued forth, one murmur of delight arose all round the board, and even Tiny Tim, excited by the two young Cratchits, beat on the table with the handle of his knife, and feebly cried Hurrah!

There never was such a goose. Bob said he didn't believe there ever was such a goose cooked. Its tenderness and flavour, size and cheapness, were the themes of universal admiration. Eked out by apple-sauce and mashed potatoes, it was a sufficient dinner for the whole family; indeed, as Mrs Cratchit said with great delight (surveying one small atom of a bone upon the dish), they hadn't ate it all at last! Yet every one had had enough, and the youngest Cratchits in particular, were steeped in sage and onion to the eyebrows! But now, the plates being changed by Miss Belinda, Mrs Cratchit left the room alone–too nervous to bear witnesses–to take the pudding up and bring it in.

Suppose it should not be done enough! Suppose it should break in turning out. Suppose somebody should have got over the wall of the back-yard, and stolen it, while they were merry with the goose–a supposition at which the two young Cratchits became livid! All sorts of horrors were supposed.

Hallo! A great deal of steam! The pudding was out of the copper. A smell like a washing-day! That was the cloth. A smell like an eating-house and a pastrycook's next door to each other, with a laundress's next door to that! That was the pudding! In half a minute Mrs Cratchit entered–flushed, but smiling proudly–with the pudding, like a speckled cannon-ball, so hard and firm, blazing in half of half-a-quartern of ignited brandy, and bedight with Christmas holly stuck into the top.

Oh, a wonderful pudding! Bob Cratchit said, and calmly too, that he regarded it as the greatest success achieved by Mrs Cratchit since their marriage. Mrs Cratchit said that now the weight was off her mind, she would confess she had had her doubts about the quantity of flour. Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been flat heresy to do so. Any Cratchit would have blushed to hint at such a thing.

At last the dinner was all done, the cloth was cleared, the hearth swept, and the fire made up. The compound in the jug being tasted, and considered perfect, apples and oranges were put upon the table, and a shovel-full of chestnuts on the fire. Then all the Cratchit family drew round the hearth, in what Bob Cratchit called a circle, meaning half a one; and at Bob Cratchit's elbow stood the family display of glass. Two tumblers, and a custard-cup without a handle.

These held the hot stuff from the jug, however, as well as golden goblets would have done; and Bob served it out with beaming looks, while the chestnuts on the fire sputtered and cracked noisily. Then Bob proposed:

'A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!'

Which all the family re-echoed.

'God bless us every one!' said Tiny Tim, the last of all.

He sat very close to his father's side upon his little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him.

'Spirit,' said Scrooge, with an interest he had never felt before, 'tell me if Tiny Tim will live.'

'I see a vacant seat,' replied the Ghost,' in the poor chimney-corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die.'

'No, no,' said Scrooge. 'Oh, no, kind Spirit! say he will be spared.'

'If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race,' returned the Ghost, 'will find him here. What then. If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.'

Scrooge hung his head to hear his own words quoted by the Spirit, and was overcome with penitence and grief.

'Man,' said the Ghost, 'if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered What the surplus is, and Where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die? It may be, that in the sight of Heaven, you are more worthless and less fit to live than millions like this poor man's child. Oh God! to hear the Insect on the leaf pronouncing on the too much life among his hungry brothers in the dust.'

Scrooge bent before the Ghost's rebuke, and trembling cast his eyes upon the ground. But he raised them speedily, on hearing his own name.

'Mr Scrooge!' said Bob; 'I'll give you Mr Scrooge, the Founder of the Feast!'

'The Founder of the Feast indeed!' cried Mrs Cratchit, reddening. 'I wish I had him here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it.'

'My dear,' said Bob, 'the children! Christmas Day.'

'It should be Christmas Day, I am sure,' said she, 'on which one drinks the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Mr Scrooge. You know he is, Robert. Nobody knows it better than you do, poor fellow.'

'My dear,' was Bob's mild answer, 'Christmas Day.'

'I'll drink his health for your sake and the Day's,' said Mrs Cratchit,' not for his. Long life to him! A merry Christmas and a happy new year!–he'll be very merry and very happy, I have no doubt!'

The children drank the toast after her. It was the first of their proceedings which had no heartiness. Tiny Tim drank it last of all, but he didn't care twopence for it. Scrooge was the Ogre of the family. The mention of his name cast a dark shadow on the party, which was not dispelled for full five minutes.

After it had passed away, they were ten times merrier than before, from the mere relief of Scrooge the Baleful being done with. Bob Cratchit told them how he had a situation in his eye for Master Peter, which would bring in, if obtained, full five-and-sixpence weekly. The two young Cratchits laughed tremendously at the idea of Peter s being a man of business; and Peter himself looked thoughtfully at the fire from between his collars, as if he were deliberating what particular investments he should favour when he came into the receipt of that bewildering income. Martha, who was a poor apprentice at a milliner's, then told them what kind of work she had to do, and how many hours she worked at a stretch, and how she meant to lie abed to-morrow morning for a good long rest; to-morrow being a holiday she passed at home. Also how she had seen a countess and a lord some days before, and how the lord 'was much about as tall as Peter;' at which Peter pulled up his collars so high that you couldn't have seen his head if you had been there. All this time the chestnuts and the jug went round and round; and by-and-bye they had a song, about a lost child travelling in the snow, from Tiny Tim, who had a plaintive little voice, and sang it very well indeed.

There was nothing of high mark in this. They were not a handsome family; they were not well dressed; their shoes were far from being water-proof; their clothes were scanty; and Peter might have known, and very likely did, the inside of a pawnbroker's. But, they were happy, grateful, pleased with one another, and contented with the time; and when they faded, and looked happier yet in the bright sprinklings of the Spirit's torch at parting, Scrooge had his eye upon them, and especially on Tiny Tim, until the last.

By this time it was getting dark, and snowing pretty heavily; and as Scrooge and the Spirit went along the streets, the brightness of the roaring fires in kitchens, parlours, and all sorts of rooms, was wonderful. Here, the flickering of the blaze showed preparations for a cosy dinner, with hot plates baking through and through before the fire, and deep red curtains, ready to be drawn to shut out cold and darkness. There all the children of the house were running out into the snow to meet their married sisters, brothers, cousins, uncles, aunts, and be the first to greet them. Here, again, were shadows on the window-blind of guests assembling; and there a group of handsome girls, all hooded and fur-booted, and all chattering at

once, tripped lightly off to some near neighbour's house; where, woe upon the single man who saw them enter-–artful witches, well they knew it –- in a glow!

But, if you had judged from the numbers of people on their way to friendly gatherings, you might have thought that no one was at home to give them welcome when they got there, instead of every house expecting company, and piling up its fires half-chimney high. Blessings on it, how the Ghost exulted! How it bared its breadth of breast, and opened its capacious palm, and floated on, outpouring, with a generous hand, its bright and harmless mirth on everything within its reach! The very lamplighter, who ran on before, dotting the dusky street with specks of light, and who was dressed to spend the evening somewhere, laughed out loudly as the Spirit passed, though little kenned the lamplighter that he had any company but Christmas.

And now, without a word of warning from the Ghost, they stood upon a bleak and desert moor, where monstrous masses of rude stone were cast about, as though it were the burial-place of giants; and water spread itself wheresoever it listed, or would have done so, but for the frost that held it prisoner; and nothing grew but moss and furze[9], and coarse rank grass. Down in the west the setting sun had left a streak of fiery red, which glared upon the desolation for an instant, like a sullen eye, and frowning lower, lower, lower yet, was lost in the thick gloom of darkest night.

'What place is this?' asked Scrooge.

'A place where Miners live, who labour in the bowels of the earth,' returned the Spirit. 'But they know me. See!'

Alight shone from the window of a hut, and swiftly they advanced towards it. Passing through the wall of mud and stone, they found a cheerful company assembled round a glowing fire. An old, old man and woman, with their children and their children's children, and another generation beyond that, all decked out gaily in their holiday attire. The old man, in a voice that seldom rose above the howling of the wind upon the barren waste, was singing them a Christmas song–it had been a very old song when he was a boy!-and from time to time they all joined in the chorus. So surely as they raised their voices, the old man got quite blithe and loud; and so surely as they stopped, his vigour sank again.

The Spirit did not tarry here, but bade Scrooge hold his robe, and passing on above the moor, sped – whither. Not to sea. To sea. To Scrooge's horror, looking back, he saw the last of the land, a frightful range of rocks, behind them; and his ears were deafened by the thundering of water, as it rolled and roared, and raged among the dreadful caverns it had worn, and fiercely tried to undermine the earth.

Built upon a dismal reef of sunken rocks, some league or so from shore, on which the waters chafed and dashed, the wild year through, there stood a solitary lighthouse. Great heaps of sea-weed clung to its base, and storm-birds– born of the wind one might suppose, as sea-weed of the water–rose and fell about it, like the waves they skimmed.

But even here, two men who watched the light had made a fire, that through the loophole in the thick stone wall shed out a ray of brightness on the awful sea. Joining their horny hands over the rough table at which they sat, they wished each other Merry Christmas in their can of grog; and one of them: the elder, too, with his face all damaged and scarred with hard weather, as the figure-head of an old ship might be: struck up a sturdy song that was like a Gale in itself.

Again the Ghost sped on, above the black and heaving sea –on, on–until, being far away, as he told Scrooge, from any shore, they lighted on a ship. They stood beside the helmsman at the wheel, the look-out in the bow, the officers who had the watch; dark, ghostly figures in their several stations; but every man among them hummed a Christmas tune, or had a Christmas thought, or spoke below his breath to his companion of some bygone Christmas Day, with homeward hopes belonging to it. And every man on board, waking or sleeping, good or bad, had had a kinder word for another on that day than on any

9. A spiny evergreen shrub.

day in the year; and had shared to some extent in its festivities; and had remembered those he cared for at a distance, and had known that they delighted to remember him.

It was a great surprise to Scrooge, while listening to the moaning of the wind, and thinking what a solemn thing it was to move on through the lonely darkness over an unknown abyss, whose depths were secrets as profound as Death: it was a great surprise to Scrooge, while thus engaged, to hear a hearty laugh. It was a much greater surprise to Scrooge to recognise it as his own nephew's and to find himself in a bright, dry, gleaming room, with the Spirit standing smiling by his side, and looking at that same nephew with approving affability.

'Ha, ha!' laughed Scrooge's nephew. 'Ha, ha, ha!'

If you should happen, by any unlikely chance, to know a man more blest in a laugh than Scrooge's nephew, all I can say is, I should like to know him too. Introduce him to me, and I'll cultivate his acquaintance.

It is a fair, even-handed, noble adjustment of things, that while there is infection in disease and sorrow, there is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good-humour. When Scrooge's nephew laughed in this way: holding his sides, rolling his head, and twisting his face into the most extravagant contortions: Scrooge's niece, by marriage, laughed as heartily as he. And their assembled friends being not a bit behindhand, roared out lustily.

'Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha, ha!'

'He said that Christmas was a humbug, as I live!' cried Scrooge's nephew. 'He believed it too!'

'More shame for him, Fred!' said Scrooge's niece, indignantly. Bless those women; they never do anything by halves. They are always in earnest.

She was very pretty: exceedingly pretty. With a dimpled, surprised-looking, capital face; a ripe little mouth, that seemed made to be kissed–as no doubt it was; all kinds of good little dots about her chin, that melted into one another when she laughed; and the sunniest pair of eyes you ever saw in any little creature's head. Altogether she was what you would have called provoking, you know; but satisfactory, too. Oh, perfectly satisfactory!

'He's a comical old fellow,' said Scrooge's nephew, 'that's the truth: and not so pleasant as he might be. However, his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him.'

'I'm sure he is very rich, Fred,' hinted Scrooge's niece. 'At least you always tell *me* so.'

'What of that, my dear!' said Scrooge's nephew. 'His wealth is of no use to him. He don't do any good with it. He don't make himself comfortable with it. He hasn't the satisfaction of thinking–ha, ha, ha!–that he is ever going to benefit us with it.'

'I have no patience with him,' observed Scrooge's niece. Scrooge's niece's sisters, and all the other ladies, expressed the same opinion.

'Oh, I have!' said Scrooge's nephew. 'I am sorry for him; I couldn't be angry with him if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims? Himself, always. Here, he takes it into his head to dislike us, and he won't come and dine with us. What's the consequence? He don't lose much of a dinner.'

'Indeed, I think he loses a very good dinner,' interrupted Scrooge's niece. Everybody else said the same, and they must be allowed to have been competent judges, because they had just had dinner; and, with the dessert upon the table, were clustered round the fire, by lamplight.

'Well. I'm very glad to hear it,' said Scrooge's nephew, 'because I haven't great faith in these young housekeepers. What do you say, Topper?'

Topper had clearly got his eye upon one of Scrooge's niece's sisters, for he answered that a bachelor was a wretched outcast, who had no right to express an opinion on the subject. Whereat Scrooge's niece's sister -– the plump one with the lace tucker[10]: not the one with the roses–blushed.

10. A piece of lace or the like worn around or within the top of the bodice.

‘Do go on, Fred,’ said Scrooge’s niece, clapping her hands. ‘He never finishes what he begins to say! He is such a ridiculous fellow!’

Scrooge’s nephew revelled in another laugh, and as it was impossible to keep the infection off; though the plump sister tried hard to do it with aromatic vinegar; his example was unanimously followed.

‘I was only going to say,’ said Scrooge’s nephew, ‘that the consequence of his taking a dislike to us, and not making merry with us, is, as I think, that he loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. I am sure he loses pleasanter companions than he can find in his own thoughts, either in his mouldy old office, or his dusty chambers. I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him. He may rail at Christmas till he dies, but he can’t help thinking better of it–I defy him–if he finds me going there, in good temper, year after year, and saying Uncle Scrooge, how are you. If it only puts him in the vein to leave his poor clerk fifty pounds, *that’s* something; and I think I shook him yesterday.’

It was their turn to laugh now at the notion of his shaking Scrooge. But being thoroughly good-natured, and not much caring what they laughed at, so that they laughed at any rate, he encouraged them in their merriment, and passed the bottle joyously.

After tea they had some music. For they were a musical family, and knew what they were about, when they sung a Glee or Catch[11], I can assure you: especially Topper, who could growl away in the bass like a good one, and never swell the large veins in his forehead, or get red in the face over it. Scrooge’s niece played well upon the harp; and played among other tunes a simple little air (a mere nothing: you might learn to whistle it in two minutes), which had been familiar to the child who fetched Scrooge from the boarding-school, as he had been reminded by the Ghost of Christmas Past. When this strain of music sounded, all the things that Ghost had shown him, came upon his mind; he softened more and more; and thought that if he could have listened to it often, years ago, he might have cultivated the kindnesses of life for his own happiness with his own hands, without resorting to the sexton’s spade that buried Jacob Marley.

But they didn’t devote the whole evening to music. After a while they played at forfeits; for it is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child himself. Stop! There was first a game at blind-man’s buff. Of course there was. And I no more believe Topper was really blind than I believe he had eyes in his boots. My opinion is, that it was a done thing between him and Scrooge’s nephew; and that the Ghost of Christmas Present knew it. The way he went after that plump sister in the lace tucker, was an outrage on the credulity of human nature. Knocking down the fire-irons, tumbling over the chairs, bumping against the piano, smothering himself among the curtains, wherever she went, there went he. He always knew where the plump sister was. He wouldn’t catch anybody else. If you had fallen up against him (as some of them did), on purpose, he would have made a feint of endeavouring to seize you, which would have been an affront to your understanding, and would instantly have sidled off in the direction of the plump sister. She often cried out that it wasn’t fair; and it really was not. But when at last, he caught her; when, in spite of all her silken rustlings, and her rapid flutterings past him, he got her into a corner whence there was no escape; then his conduct was the most execrable. For his pretending not to know her; his pretending that it was necessary to touch her head-dress, and further to assure himself of her identity by pressing a certain ring upon her finger, and a certain chain about her neck; was vile, monstrous! No doubt she told him her opinion of it, when, another blind-man being in office, they were so very confidential together, behind the curtains.

Scrooge’s niece was not one of the blind-man’s buff party, but was made comfortable with a large chair and a footstool, in a snug corner, where the Ghost and Scrooge were close behind her. But she

11. A glee is a song sung by three or more; a catch is a round, a song in which two or more voices sing the same melody but with each voice beginning at different times, as in “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.”

joined in the forfeits, and loved her love to admiration with all the letters of the alphabet. Likewise at the game of How, When, and Where, she was very great, and to the secret joy of Scrooge's nephew, beat her sisters hollow: though they were sharp girls too, as could have told you. There might have been twenty people there, young and old, but they all played, and so did Scrooge; for wholly forgetting in the interest he had in what was going on, that his voice made no sound in their ears, he sometimes came out with his guess quite loud, and very often guessed quite right, too; for the sharpest needle, best Whitechapel, warranted not to cut in the eye, was not sharper than Scrooge; blunt as he took it in his head to be.

The Ghost was greatly pleased to find him in this mood, and looked upon him with such favour, that he begged like a boy to be allowed to stay until the guests departed. But this the Spirit said could not be done.

'Here is a new game,' said Scrooge. 'One half hour, Spirit, only one!'

It was a Game called Yes and No, where Scrooge's nephew had to think of something, and the rest must find out what; he only answering to their questions yes or no, as the case was. The brisk fire of questioning to which he was exposed, elicited from him that he was thinking of an animal, a live animal, rather a disagreeable animal, a savage animal, an animal that growled and grunted sometimes, and talked sometimes, and lived in London, and walked about the streets, and wasn't made a show of, and wasn't led by anybody, and didn't live in a menagerie, and was never killed in a market, and was not a horse, or an ass, or a cow, or a bull, or a tiger, or a dog, or a pig, or a cat, or a bear. At every fresh question that was put to him, this nephew burst into a fresh roar of laughter; and was so inexpressibly tickled, that he was obliged to get up off the sofa and stamp. At last the plump sister, falling into a similar state, cried out:

'I have found it out! I know what it is, Fred! I know what it is!'

'What is it?' cried Fred.

'It's your Uncle Scrooge!'

Which it certainly was. Admiration was the universal sentiment, though some objected that the reply to 'Is it a bear?' ought to have been 'Yes;' inasmuch as an answer in the negative was sufficient to have diverted their thoughts from Mr Scrooge, supposing they had ever had any tendency that way.

'He has given us plenty of merriment, I am sure,' said Fred, 'and it would be ungrateful not to drink his health. Here is a glass of mulled wine ready to our hand at the moment; and I say,"Uncle Scrooge!" '

'Well. Uncle Scrooge!' they cried.

'A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the old man, whatever he is.' said Scrooge's nephew. 'He wouldn't take it from me, but may he have it, nevertheless. Uncle Scrooge!'

Uncle Scrooge had imperceptibly become so gay and light of heart, that he would have pledged the unconscious company in return, and thanked them in an inaudible speech, if the Ghost had given him time. But the whole scene passed off in the breath of the last word spoken by his nephew; and he and the Spirit were again upon their travels.

Much they saw, and far they went, and many homes they visited, but always with a happy end. The Spirit stood beside sick beds, and they were cheerful; on foreign lands, and they were close at home; by struggling men, and they were patient in their greater hope; by poverty, and it was rich. In almshouse, hospital, and jail, in misery's every refuge, where vain man in his little brief authority[12] had not made fast the door, and barred the Spirit out, he left his blessing, and taught Scrooge his precepts.

It was a long night, if it were only a night; but Scrooge had his doubts of this, because the Christmas Holidays appeared to be condensed into the space of time they passed together. It was strange, too, that while Scrooge remained unaltered in his outward form, the Ghost grew older, clearly older. Scrooge

12. cf. *Measure for Measure*, 2.2:121-22, "But man, proud man,/Dress'd in a little brief authority."

had observed this change, but never spoke of it, until they left a children's Twelfth Night party, when, looking at the Spirit as they stood together in an open place, he noticed that its hair was grey.

'Are spirits' lives so short?' asked Scrooge.

'My life upon this globe, is very brief,' replied the Ghost. 'It ends to-night.'

'To-night!' cried Scrooge.

'To-night at midnight. Hark! The time is drawing near.'

The chimes were ringing the three quarters past eleven at that moment.

'Forgive me if I am not justified in what I ask,' said Scrooge, looking intently at the Spirit's robe, 'but I see something strange, and not belonging to yourself, protruding from your skirts. Is it a foot or a claw?'

'It might be a claw, for the flesh there is upon it,' was the Spirit's sorrowful reply. 'Look here.'

From the foldings of its robe, it brought two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable. They knelt down at its feet, and clung upon the outside of its garment.

'Oh, Man! look here! Look, look, down here!' exclaimed the Ghost.

They were a boy and a girl. Yellow, meagre, ragged, scowling, wolfish; but prostrate, too, in their humility. Where graceful youth should have filled their features out, and touched them with its freshest tints, a stale and shrivelled hand, like that of age, had pinched, and twisted them, and pulled them into shreds. Where angels might have sat enthroned, devils lurked, and glared out menacing. No change, no degradation, no perversion of humanity, in any grade, through all the mysteries of wonderful creation, has monsters half so horrible and dread.

Scrooge started back, appalled. Having them shown to him in this way, he tried to say they were fine children, but the words choked themselves, rather than be parties to a lie of such enormous magnitude.

'Spirit, are they yours?' Scrooge could say no more.

'They are Man's,' said the Spirit, looking down upon them. 'And they cling to me, appealing from their fathers. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny it!' cried the Spirit, stretching out its hand towards the city. 'Slander those who tell it ye! Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse! And abide the end!'

'Have they no refuge or resource?' cried Scrooge.

'Are there no prisons?' said the Spirit, turning on him for the last time with his own words. 'Are there no workhouses?'

The bell struck twelve.

Scrooge looked about him for the Ghost, and saw it not. As the last stroke ceased to vibrate, he remembered the prediction of old Jacob Marley, and lifting up his eyes, beheld a solemn Phantom, draped and hooded, coming, like a mist along the ground, towards him.

26.

A Christmas Carol: Stave 4

Charles Dickens

The Last of the Spirits

The Phantom slowly, gravely, silently approached. When it came, Scrooge bent down upon his knee; for in the very air through which this Spirit moved it seemed to scatter gloom and mystery.

It was shrouded in a deep black garment, which concealed its head, its face, its form, and left nothing of it visible save one outstretched hand. But for this it would have been difficult to detach its figure from the night, and separate it from the darkness by which it was surrounded.

He felt that it was tall and stately when it came beside him, and that its mysterious presence filled him with a solemn dread. He knew no more, for the Spirit neither spoke nor moved.

'I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come?' said Scrooge.

The Spirit answered not, but pointed onward with its hand.

'You are about to show me shadows of the things that have not happened, but will happen in the time before us,' Scrooge pursued. 'Is that so, Spirit?'

The upper portion of the garment was contracted for an instant in its folds, as if the Spirit had inclined its head. That was the only answer he received.

Although well used to ghostly company by this time, Scrooge feared the silent shape so much that his legs trembled beneath him, and he found that he could hardly stand when he prepared to follow it. The Spirit pauses a moment, as observing his condition, and giving him time to recover.

But Scrooge was all the worse for this. It thrilled him with a vague uncertain horror, to know that behind the dusky shroud, there were ghostly eyes intently fixed upon him, while he, though he stretched his own to the utmost, could see nothing but a spectral hand and one great heap of black.

'Ghost of the Future!' he exclaimed, 'I fear you more than any spectre I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear you company, and do it with a thankful heart. Will you not speak to me?'

It gave him no reply. The hand was pointed straight before them.

'Lead on!' said Scrooge. 'Lead on! The night is waning fast, and it is precious time to me, I know. Lead on, Spirit!'

The Phantom moved away as it had come towards him. Scrooge followed in the shadow of its dress, which bore him up, he thought, and carried him along.

They scarcely seemed to enter the city; for the city rather seemed to spring up about them, and encompass them of its own act. But there they were, in the heart of it; on 'Change, amongst the merchants; who hurried up and down, and chinked the money in their pockets, and conversed in groups, and looked at their watches, and trifled thoughtfully with their great gold seals; and so forth, as Scrooge had seen them often.

The Spirit stopped beside one little knot of business men. Observing that the hand was pointed to them, Scrooge advanced to listen to their talk.

‘No,’ said a great fat man with a monstrous chin, ‘I don’t know much about it, either way. I only know he’s dead.’

‘When did he die?’ inquired another.

‘Last night, I believe.’

‘Why, what was the matter with him?’ asked a third, taking a vast quantity of snuff out of a very large snuff-box. ‘I thought he’d never die.’

‘God knows,’ said the first, with a yawn.

‘What has he done with his money?’ asked a red-faced gentleman with a pendulous excrescence on the end of his nose, that shook like the gills of a turkey-cock.

‘I haven’t heard,’ said the man with the large chin, yawning again. ‘Left it to his company, perhaps. He hasn’t left it to *me*. That’s all I know.’

This pleasantry was received with a general laugh.

‘It’s likely to be a very cheap funeral,’ said the same speaker; ‘for upon my life I don’t know of anybody to go to it. Suppose we make up a party and volunteer?’

‘I don’t mind going if a lunch is provided,’ observed the gentleman with the excrescence on his nose. ‘But I must be fed, if I make one.’

Another laugh.

‘Well, I am the most disinterested among you, after all,’ said the first speaker, ‘for I never wear black gloves, and I never eat lunch. But I’ll offer to go, if anybody else will. When I come to think of it, I’m not at all sure that I wasn’t his most particular friend; for we used to stop and speak whenever we met. Bye, bye!’

Speakers and listeners strolled away, and mixed with other groups. Scrooge knew the men, and looked towards the Spirit for an explanation.

The Phantom glided on into a street. Its finger pointed to two persons meeting. Scrooge listened again, thinking that the explanation might lie here.

He knew these men, also, perfectly. They were men of business: very wealthy, and of great importance. He had made a point always of standing well in their esteem: in a business point of view, that is; strictly in a business point of view.

‘How are you?’ said one.

‘How are you?’ returned the other.

‘Well!’ said the first. ‘Old Scratch[1] has got his own at last, hey?’

‘So I am told,’ returned the second. ‘Cold, isn’t it?’

‘Seasonable for Christmas time. You’re not a skater, I suppose?’

‘No. No. Something else to think of. Good morning!’

Not another word. That was their meeting, their conversation, and their parting.

Scrooge was at first inclined to be surprised that the Spirit should attach importance to conversations apparently so trivial; but feeling assured that they must have some hidden purpose, he set himself to consider what it was likely to be. They could scarcely be supposed to have any bearing on the death of Jacob, his old partner, for that was Past, and this Ghost’s province was the Future. Nor could he think of any one immediately connected with himself, to whom he could apply them. But nothing doubting that to whomsoever they applied they had some latent moral for his own improvement, he resolved to treasure up every word he heard, and everything he saw; and especially to observe the shadow of himself when it appeared. For he had an expectation that the conduct of his future self would give him the clue he missed, and would render the solution of these riddles easy.

He looked about in that very place for his own image; but another man stood in his accustomed corner,

1. The devil.

and though the clock pointed to his usual time of day for being there, he saw no likeness of himself among the multitudes that poured in through the Porch. It gave him little surprise, however; for he had been revolving in his mind a change of life, and thought and hoped he saw his new-born resolutions carried out in this.

Quiet and dark, beside him stood the Phantom, with its outstretched hand. When he roused himself from his thoughtful quest, he fancied from the turn of the hand, and its situation in reference to himself, that the Unseen Eyes were looking at him keenly. It made him shudder, and feel very cold.

They left the busy scene, and went into an obscure part of the town, where Scrooge had never penetrated before, although he recognised its situation, and its bad repute. The ways were foul and narrow; the shops and houses wretched; the people half-naked, drunken, slipshod, ugly. Alleys and archways, like so many cesspools, disgorged their offences of smell, and dirt, and life, upon the straggling streets; and the whole quarter reeked with crime, with filth, and misery.

Far in this den of infamous resort, there was a low-browed, beetling shop, below a pent-house roof[2], where iron, old rags, bottles, bones, and greasy offal, were bought. Upon the floor within, were piled up heaps of rusty keys, nails, chains, hinges, files, scales, weights, and refuse iron of all kinds. Secrets that few would like to scrutinise were bred and hidden in mountains of unseemly rags, masses of corrupted fat, and sepulchres of bones. Sitting in among the wares he dealt in, by a charcoal stove, made of old bricks, was a grey-haired rascal, nearly seventy years of age; who had screened himself from the cold air without, by a frousy curtaining of miscellaneous tatters, hung upon a line; and smoked his pipe in all the luxury of calm retirement.

Scrooge and the Phantom came into the presence of this man, just as a woman with a heavy bundle slunk into the shop. But she had scarcely entered, when another woman, similarly laden, came in too; and she was closely followed by a man in faded black, who was no less startled by the sight of them, than they had been upon the recognition of each other. After a short period of blank astonishment, in which the old man with the pipe had joined them, they all three burst into a laugh.

‘Let the charwoman alone to be the first!’ cried she who had entered first. ‘Let the laundress alone to be the second; and let the undertaker’s man alone to be the third. Look here, old Joe, here’s a chance! If we haven’t all three met here without meaning it!’

‘You couldn’t have met in a better place,’ said old Joe, removing his pipe from his mouth. ‘Come into the parlour. You were made free of it long ago, you know; and the other two an’t strangers. Stop till I shut the door of the shop. Ah! How it skreeks! There an’t such a rusty bit of metal in the place as its own hinges, I believe; and I’m sure there’s no such old bones here, as mine. Ha, ha! We’re all suitable to our calling, we’re well matched. Come into the parlour. Come into the parlour.’

The parlour was the space behind the screen of rags. The old man raked the fire together with an old stair-rod, and having trimmed his smoky lamp (for it was night), with the stem of his pipe, put it in his mouth again.

While he did this, the woman who had already spoken threw her bundle on the floor, and sat down in a flaunting manner on a stool; crossing her elbows on her knees, and looking with a bold defiance at the other two.

‘What odds then? What odds, Mrs Dilber?’ said the woman. ‘Every person has a right to take care of themselves. *He* always did!’

‘That’s true, indeed!’ said the laundress. ‘No man more so.’

‘Why then, don’t stand staring as if you was afraid, woman; who’s the wiser? We’re not going to pick holes in each other’s coats, I suppose?’

‘No, indeed!’ said Mrs Dilber and the man together. ‘We should hope not.’

2. A roof sloping out from a building.

‘Very well, then!’ cried the woman. ‘That’s enough. Who’s the worse for the loss of a few things like these? Not a dead man, I suppose?’

‘No, indeed,’ said Mrs Dilber, laughing.

‘If he wanted to keep them after he was dead, a wicked old screw,’ pursued the woman, ‘why wasn’t he natural in his lifetime? If he had been, he’d have had somebody to look after him when he was struck with Death, instead of lying gasping out his last there, alone by himself.’

‘It’s the truest word that ever was spoke,’ said Mrs Dilber. ‘It’s a judgment on him.’

‘I wish it was a little heavier judgment,’ replied the woman;’ and it should have been, you may depend upon it, if I could have laid my hands on anything else. Open that bundle, old Joe, and let me know the value of it. Speak out plain. I’m not afraid to be the first, nor afraid for them to see it. We know pretty well that we were helping ourselves, before we met here, I believe. It’s no sin. Open the bundle, Joe.’

But the gallantry of her friends would not allow of this; and the man in faded black, mounting the breach first, produced his plunder. It was not extensive. A seal or two, a pencil-case, a pair of sleeve-buttons, and a brooch of no great value, were all. They were severally examined and appraised by old Joe, who chalked the sums he was disposed to give for each, upon the wall, and added them up into a total when he found there was nothing more to come.

‘That’s your account,’ said Joe, ‘and I wouldn’t give another sixpence, if I was to be boiled for not doing it. Who’s next?’

Mrs Dilber was next. Sheets and towels, a little wearing apparel, two old-fashioned silver teaspoons, a pair of sugar-tongs, and a few boots. Her account was stated on the wall in the same manner.

‘I always give too much to ladies. It’s a weakness of mine, and that’s the way I ruin myself,’ said old Joe. ‘That’s your account. If you asked me for another penny, and made it an open question, I’d repent of being so liberal and knock off half-a-crown.’

‘And now undo my bundle, Joe,’ said the first woman.

Joe went down on his knees for the greater convenience of opening it, and having unfastened a great many knots, dragged out a large and heavy roll of some dark stuff.

‘What do you call this?’ said Joe. ‘Bed-curtains?’

‘Ah,’ returned the woman, laughing and leaning forward on her crossed arms. ‘Bed-curtains!’

‘You don’t mean to say you took them down, rings and all, with him lying there?’ said Joe.

‘Yes I do,’ replied the woman. ‘Why not?’

‘You were born to make your fortune,’ said Joe, ‘and you’ll certainly do it.’

‘I certainly shan’t hold my hand, when I can get anything in it by reaching it out, for the sake of such a man as he was, I promise you, Joe,’ returned the woman coolly. ‘Don’t drop that oil upon the blankets, now.’

‘His blankets?’ asked Joe.

‘Whose else’s do you think?’ replied the woman. ‘He isn’t likely to take cold without them, I dare say.’

‘I hope he didn’t die of any thing catching? Eh?’ said old Joe, stopping in his work, and looking up.

‘Don’t you be afraid of that,’ returned the woman. ‘I an’t so fond of his company that I’d loiter about him for such things, if he did. Ah! you may look through that shirt till your eyes ache; but you won’t find a hole in it, nor a threadbare place. It’s the best he had, and a fine one too. They’d have wasted it, if it hadn’t been for me.’

‘What do you call wasting of it?’ asked old Joe.

‘Putting it on him to be buried in, to be sure,’ replied the woman with a laugh. ‘Somebody was fool enough to do it, but I took it off again. If calico an’t good enough for such a purpose, it isn’t good enough for anything. It’s quite as becoming to the body. He can’t look uglier than he did in that one.’

Scrooge listened to this dialogue in horror. As they sat grouped about their spoil, in the scanty light

afforded by the old man's lamp, he viewed them with a detestation and disgust, which could hardly have been greater, though they demons, marketing the corpse itself.

'Ha, ha!' laughed the same woman, when old Joe, producing a flannel bag with money in it, told out their several gains upon the ground. 'This is the end of it, you see. He frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead! Ha, ha, ha!'

'Spirit!' said Scrooge, shuddering from head to foot. 'I see, I see. The case of this unhappy man might be my own. My life tends that way, now. Merciful Heaven, what is this?'

He recoiled in terror, for the scene had changed, and now he almost touched a bed: a bare, uncurtained bed: on which, beneath a ragged sheet, there lay a something covered up, which, though it was dumb, announced itself in awful language.

The room was very dark, too dark to be observed with any accuracy, though Scrooge glanced round it in obedience to a secret impulse, anxious to know what kind of room it was. A pale light, rising in the outer air, fell straight upon the bed; and on it, plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for, was the body of this man.

Scrooge glanced towards the Phantom. Its steady hand was pointed to the head. The cover was so carelessly adjusted that the slightest raising of it, the motion of a finger upon Scrooge's part, would have disclosed the face. He thought of it, felt how easy it would be to do, and longed to do it; but had no more power to withdraw the veil than to dismiss the spectre at his side.

Oh cold, cold, rigid, dreadful Death, set up thine altar here, and dress it with such terrors as thou hast at thy command: for this is thy dominion! But of the loved, revered, and honoured head, thou canst not turn one hair to thy dread purposes, or make one feature odious. It is not that the hand is heavy and will fall down when released; it is not that the heart and pulse are still; but that the hand was open, generous, and true; the heart brave, warm, and tender; and the pulse a man's. Strike, Shadow, strike! And see his good deeds springing from the wound, to sow the world with life immortal!

No voice pronounced these words in Scrooge's ears, and yet he heard them when he looked upon the bed. He thought, if this man could be raised up now, what would be his foremost thoughts? Avarice, hard-dealing, griping cares? They have brought him to a rich end, truly!

He lay, in the dark empty house, with not a man, a woman, or a child, to say that he was kind to me in this or that, and for the memory of one kind word I will be kind to him. A cat was tearing at the door, and there was a sound of gnawing rats beneath the hearth-stone. What *they* wanted in the room of death, and why they were so restless and disturbed, Scrooge did not dare to think.

'Spirit!' he said, 'this is a fearful place. In leaving it, I shall not leave its lesson, trust me. Let us go!'

Still the Ghost pointed with an unmoved finger to the head.

'I understand you,' Scrooge returned, 'and I would do it, if I could. But I have not the power, Spirit. I have not the power.'

Again it seemed to look upon him.

'If there is any person in the town, who feels emotion caused by this man's death,' said Scrooge quite agonised, 'show that person to me, Spirit, I beseech you!'

The Phantom spread its dark robe before him for a moment, like a wing; and withdrawing it, revealed a room by daylight, where a mother and her children were.

She was expecting some one, and with anxious eagerness; for she walked up and down the room; started at every sound; looked out from the window; glanced at the clock; tried, but in vain, to work with her needle; and could hardly bear the voices of the children in their play.

At length the long-expected knock was heard. She hurried to the door, and met her husband; a man whose face was careworn and depressed, though he was young. There was a remarkable expression in it now; a kind of serious delight of which he felt ashamed, and which he struggled to repress.

He sat down to the dinner that had been boarding for him by the fire; and when she asked him faintly what news (which was not until after a long silence), he appeared embarrassed how to answer.

'Is it good.' she said, 'or bad?' — to help him.

'Bad,' he answered.

'We are quite ruined?'

'No. There is hope yet, Caroline.'

'If *he* relents,' she said, amazed, 'there is! Nothing is past hope, if such a miracle has happened.'

'He is past relenting,' said her husband. 'He is dead.'

She was a mild and patient creature if her face spoke truth; but she was thankful in her soul to hear it, and she said so, with clasped hands. She prayed forgiveness the next moment, and was sorry; but the first was the emotion of her heart.

'What the half-drunken woman whom I told you of last night, said to me, when I tried to see him and obtain a week's delay; and what I thought was a mere excuse to avoid me; turns out to have been quite true. He was not only very ill, but dying, then.'

'To whom will our debt be transferred?'

'I don't know. But before that time we shall be ready with the money; and even though we were not, it would be a bad fortune indeed to find so merciless a creditor in his successor. We may sleep to-night with light hearts, Caroline!'

Yes. Soften it as they would, their hearts were lighter. The children's faces, hushed and clustered round to hear what they so little understood, were brighter; and it was a happier house for this man's death! The only emotion that the Ghost could show him, caused by the event, was one of pleasure.

'Let me see some tenderness connected with a death,' said Scrooge;' or that dark chamber, Spirit, which we left just now, will be for ever present to me.'

The Ghost conducted him through several streets familiar to his feet; and as they went along, Scrooge looked here and there to find himself, but nowhere was he to be seen. They entered poor Bob Cratchit's house; the dwelling he had visited before; and found the mother and the children seated round the fire.

Quiet. Very quiet. The noisy little Cratchits were as still as statues in one corner, and sat looking up at Peter, who had a book before him. The mother and her daughters were engaged in sewing. But surely they were very quiet!

'And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them.[3]'

Where had Scrooge heard those words? He had not dreamed them. The boy must have read them out, as he and the Spirit crossed the threshold. Why did he not go on?

The mother laid her work upon the table, and put her hand up to her face.

'The colour hurts my eyes,' she said.

The colour? Ah, poor Tiny Tim!

'They're better now again,' said Cratchit's wife. 'It makes them weak by candle-light; and I wouldn't show weak eyes to your father when he comes home, for the world. It must be near his time.'

'Past it rather,' Peter answered, shutting up his book. 'But I think he has walked a little slower than he used, these few last evenings, mother.'

They were very quiet again. At last she said, and in a steady, cheerful voice, that only faltered once:

'I have known him walk with–I have known him walk with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder, very fast indeed.'

'And so have I,' cried Peter. 'Often.'

3. cf. Mark 9: 36. See also Matthew 18:2-3, "And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, "...Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

‘And so have I,’ exclaimed another. So had all.

‘But he was very light to carry,’ she resumed, intent upon her work, ‘and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble–no trouble. And there is your father at the door!’

She hurried out to meet him; and little Bob in his comforter – he had need of it, poor fellow – came in. His tea was ready for him on the hob, and they all tried who should help him to it most. Then the two young Cratchits got upon his knees and laid, each child a little cheek, against his face, as if they said, ‘Don’t mind it, father. Don’t be grieved!’

Bob was very cheerful with them, and spoke pleasantly to all the family. He looked at the work upon the table, and praised the industry and speed of Mrs Cratchit and the girls. They would be done long before Sunday, he said.

‘Sunday! You went to-day, then, Robert?’ said his wife.

‘Yes, my dear,’ returned Bob. ‘I wish you could have gone. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is. But you’ll see it often. I promised him that I would walk there on a Sunday. My little, little child!’ cried Bob. ‘My little child!’

He broke down all at once. He couldn’t help it. If he could have helped it, he and his child would have been farther apart perhaps than they were.

He left the room, and went up-stairs into the room above, which was lighted cheerfully, and hung with Christmas. There was a chair set close beside the child, and there were signs of some one having been there, lately. Poor Bob sat down in it, and when he had thought a little and composed himself, he kissed the little face. He was reconciled to what had happened, and went down again quite happy.

They drew about the fire, and talked; the girls and mother working still. Bob told them of the extraordinary kindness of Mr Scrooge’s nephew, whom he had scarcely seen but once, and who, meeting him in the street that day, and seeing that he looked a little–‘just a little down you know,’ said Bob, inquired what had happened to distress him. ‘On which,’ said Bob, ‘for he is the pleasantest-spoken gentleman you ever heard, I told him. ‘I am heartily sorry for it, Mr Cratchit,’ he said, ‘and heartily sorry for your good wife.’ By the bye, how he ever knew that, I don’t know.’

‘Knew what, my dear.’

‘Why, that you were a good wife,’ replied Bob.

‘Everybody knows that,’ said Peter.

‘Very well observed, my boy,’ cried Bob. ‘I hope they do. ‘Heartily sorry,’ he said, ‘for your good wife. If I can be of service to you in any way,’ he said, giving me his card, ‘that’s where I live. Pray come to me.’ Now, it wasn’t,’ cried Bob, ‘for the sake of anything he might be able to do for us, so much as for his kind way, that this was quite delightful. It really seemed as if he had known our Tiny Tim, and felt with us.’

‘I’m sure he’s a good soul!’ said Mrs Cratchit.

‘You would be surer of it, my dear,’ returned Bob, ‘if you saw and spoke to him. I shouldn’t be at all surprised – mark what I say! – if he got Peter a better situation.’

‘Only hear that, Peter,’ said Mrs Cratchit.

‘And then,’ cried one of the girls, ‘Peter will be keeping company with some one, and setting up for himself.’

‘Get along with you!’ retorted Peter, grinning.

‘It’s just as likely as not,’ said Bob, ‘one of these days; though there’s plenty of time for that, my dear. But however and when ever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim – shall we – or this first parting that there was among us?’

‘Never, father!’ cried they all.

‘And I know,’ said Bob, ‘I know, my dears, that when we recollect how patient and how mild he was;

although he was a little, little child; we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it.'

'No, never, father!' they all cried again.

'I am very happy,' said little Bob, 'I am very happy!'

Mrs Cratchit kissed him, his daughters kissed him, the two young Cratchits kissed him, and Peter and himself shook hands. Spirit of Tiny Tim, thy childish essence was from God!

'Spectre,' said Scrooge, 'something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how. Tell me what man that was whom we saw lying dead?'

The Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come conveyed him, as before – though at a different time, he thought: indeed, there seemed no order in these latter visions, save that they were in the Future – into the resorts of business men, but showed him not himself. Indeed, the Spirit did not stay for anything, but went straight on, as to the end just now desired, until besought by Scrooge to tarry for a moment.

'This courts,' said Scrooge, 'through which we hurry now, is where my place of occupation is, and has been for a length of time. I see the house. Let me behold what I shall be, in days to come.'

The Spirit stopped; the hand was pointed elsewhere.

'The house is yonder,' Scrooge exclaimed. 'Why do you point away?'

The inexorable finger underwent no change.

Scrooge hastened to the window of his office, and looked in. It was an office still, but not his. The furniture was not the same, and the figure in the chair was not himself. The Phantom pointed as before.

He joined it once again, and wondering why and whither he had gone, accompanied it until they reached an iron gate. He paused to look round before entering.

A churchyard. Here, then, the wretched man whose name he had now to learn, lay underneath the ground. It was a worthy place. Walled in by houses; overrun by grass and weeds, the growth of vegetation's death, not life; choked up with too much burying; fat with repleted appetite. A worthy place!

The Spirit stood among the graves, and pointed down to One. He advanced towards it trembling. The Phantom was exactly as it had been, but he dreaded that he saw new meaning in its solemn shape.

'Before I draw nearer to that stone to which you point,' said Scrooge, 'answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of things that May be, only?'

Still the Ghost pointed downward to the grave by which it stood.

'Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends, to which, if persevered in, they must lead,' said Scrooge. 'But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me!'

The Spirit was immovable as ever.

Scrooge crept towards it, trembling as he went; and following the finger, read upon the stone of the neglected grave his own name, Ebenezer Scrooge.

'Am I that man who lay upon the bed?' he cried, upon his knees.

The finger pointed from the grave to him, and back again.

'No, Spirit! Oh no, no!'

The finger still was there.

'Spirit!' he cried, tight clutching at its robe, 'hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope?'

For the first time the hand appeared to shake.

'Good Spirit,' he pursued, as down upon the ground he fell before it: 'Your nature intercedes for me, and pities me. Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life?'

The kind hand trembled.

'I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. Oh, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!'

In his agony, he caught the spectral hand. It sought to free itself, but he was strong in his entreaty, and detained it. The Spirit, stronger yet, repulsed him.

Holding up his hands in a last prayer to have his fate reversed, he saw an alteration in the Phantom's hood and dress. It shrunk, collapsed, and dwindled down into a bedpost.

27.

A Christmas Carol: Stave 5

Charles Dickens

The End of It

Yes! and the bedpost was his own. The bed was his own, the room was his own. Best and happiest of all, the Time before him was his own, to make amends in!

‘I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future!’ Scrooge repeated, as he scrambled out of bed. ‘The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. Oh, Jacob Marley! Heaven, and the Christmas Time be praised for this! I say it on my knees, old Jacob, on my knees!’

He was so fluttered and so glowing with his good intentions, that his broken voice would scarcely answer to his call. He had been sobbing violently in his conflict with the Spirit, and his face was wet with tears.

‘They are not torn down.’ cried Scrooge, folding one of his bed-curtains in his arms, ‘they are not torn down, rings and all. They are here – I am here – the shadows of the things that would have been, may be dispelled. They will be. I know they will!’

His hands were busy with his garments all this time; turning them inside out, putting them on upside down, tearing them, mislaying them, making them parties to every kind of extravagance.

‘I don’t know what to do!’ cried Scrooge, laughing and crying in the same breath; and making a perfect Laocoön of himself with his stockings[1]. ‘I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody! A happy New Year to all the world! Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!’

He had frisked into the sitting-room, and was now standing there: perfectly winded.

‘There’s the saucepan that the gruel was in!’ cried Scrooge, starting off again, and going round the fireplace. ‘There’s the door, by which the Ghost of Jacob Marley entered! There’s the corner where the Ghost of Christmas Present sat! There’s the window where I saw the wandering Spirits! It’s all right, it’s all true, it all happened. Ha ha ha!’

Really, for a man who had been out of practice for so many years, it was a splendid laugh, a most illustrious laugh. The father of a long, long line of brilliant laughs!

‘I don’t know what day of the month it is.’ said Scrooge. ‘I don’t know how long I’ve been among the Spirits. I don’t know anything. I’m quite a baby. Never mind. I don’t care. I’d rather be a baby. Hallo! Whoop! Hallo here!’

He was checked in his transports by the churches ringing out the lustiest peals he had ever heard. Clash, clang, hammer; ding, dong, bell! Bell, dong, ding; hammer, clang, clash! Oh, glorious, glorious!

Running to the window, he opened it, and put out his head. No fog, no mist; clear, bright, jovial, stirring, cold; cold, piping for the blood to dance to; Golden sunlight; Heavenly sky; sweet fresh air; merry bells. Oh, glorious! Glorious!

1. Scrooge struggles with his stockings as Laocoön struggles with the two sea serpents (*Aeneid*, Bk. 2).

'What's to-day?' cried Scrooge, calling downward to a boy in Sunday clothes, who perhaps had loitered in to look about him.

'Eh?' returned the boy, with all his might of wonder.

'What's to-day, my fine fellow?' said Scrooge.

'To-day?' replied the boy. 'Why, Christmas Day.'

'It's Christmas Day!' said Scrooge to himself. 'I haven't missed it. The Spirits have done it all in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can. Of course they can. Hallo, my fine fellow!'

'Hallo!' returned the boy.

'Do you know the Poulterer's, in the next street but one, at the corner?' Scrooge inquired.

'I should hope I did,' replied the lad.

'An intelligent boy!' said Scrooge. 'A remarkable boy! Do you know whether they've sold the prize Turkey that was hanging up there? – Not the little prize Turkey: the big one?'

'What, the one as big as me?' returned the boy.

'What a delightful boy!' said Scrooge. 'It's a pleasure to talk to him. Yes, my buck!'

'It's hanging there now,' replied the boy.

'Is it?' said Scrooge. 'Go and buy it.'

'Walk-er[2]!' exclaimed the boy.

'No, no,' said Scrooge, 'I am in earnest. Go and buy it, and tell them to bring it here, that I may give them the direction where to take it. Come back with the man, and I'll give you a shilling. Come back with him in less than five minutes and I'll give you half-a-crown!'

The boy was off like a shot. He must have had a steady hand at a trigger who could have got a shot off half so fast.

'I'll send it to Bob Cratchit's,' whispered Scrooge, rubbing his hands, and splitting with a laugh. 'He sha'nt know who sends it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim. Joe Miller[3] never made such a joke as sending it to Bob's will be!'

The hand in which he wrote the address was not a steady one, but write it he did, somehow, and went down-stairs to open the street door, ready for the coming of the poulterer's man. As he stood there, waiting his arrival, the knocker caught his eye.

'I shall love it, as long as I live!' cried Scrooge, patting it with his hand. 'I scarcely ever looked at it before. What an honest expression it has in its face. It's a wonderful knocker. – Here's the Turkey. Hallo! Whoop! How are you? Merry Christmas!'

It was a Turkey! He never could have stood upon his legs, that bird. He would have snapped them short off in a minute, like sticks of sealing-wax.

'Why, it's impossible to carry that to Camden Town,' said Scrooge. 'You must have a cab.'

The chuckle with which he said this, and the chuckle with which he paid for the Turkey, and the chuckle with which he paid for the cab, and the chuckle with which he recompensed the boy, were only to be exceeded by the chuckle with which he sat down breathless in his chair again, and chuckled till he cried.

Shaving was not an easy task, for his hand continued to shake very much; and shaving requires attention, even when you don't dance while you are at it. But if he had cut the end of his nose off, he would have put a piece of sticking-plaister over it, and been quite satisfied.

He dressed himself all in his best, and at last got out into the streets. The people were by this time pouring forth, as he had seen them with the Ghost of Christmas Present; and walking with his hands behind him, Scrooge regarded every one with a delighted smile. He looked so irresistibly pleasant, in a

2. A Victorian cockney expression, indicating amused incredulity; more fully, "Hooky Walker." [O.E.D.]

3. Joe Miller (1684-1738). A famous comic actor. In 1739, John Mottley published a joke book, Joe Miller's Jests. Due to the wide sales of the book, many popular jokes came to be known as Joe Millers

word, that three or four good-humoured fellows said, ‘Good morning, sir! A merry Christmas to you!’ And Scrooge said often afterwards, that of all the blithe sounds he had ever heard, those were the blithest in his ears.

He had not gone far, when coming on towards him he beheld the portly gentleman, who had walked into his counting-house the day before, and said, ‘Scrooge and Marley’s, I believe.’ It sent a pang across his heart to think how this old gentleman would look upon him when they met; but he knew what path lay straight before him, and he took it.

‘My dear sir,’ said Scrooge, quickening his pace, and taking the old gentleman by both his hands. ‘How do you do? I hope you succeeded yesterday. It was very kind of you. A merry Christmas to you, sir!’

‘Mr Scrooge?’

‘Yes,’ said Scrooge. ‘That is my name, and I fear it may not be pleasant to you. Allow me to ask your pardon. And will you have the goodness’ – here Scrooge whispered in his ear.

‘Lord bless me!’ cried the gentleman, as if his breath were taken away. ‘My dear Mr Scrooge, are you serious?’

‘If you please,’ said Scrooge. ‘Not a farthing less. A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you. Will you do me that favour?’

‘My dear sir,’ said the other, shaking hands with him. ‘I don’t know what to say to such munificence-’

‘Don’t say anything please,’ retorted Scrooge. ‘Come and see me. Will you come and see me?’

‘I will!’ cried the old gentleman. And it was clear he meant to do it.

‘Thank you,’ said Scrooge. ‘I am much obliged to you. I thank you fifty times. Bless you!’

He went to church, and walked about the streets, and watched the people hurrying to and fro, and patted children on the head, and questioned beggars, and looked down into the kitchens of houses, and up to the windows, and found that everything could yield him pleasure. He had never dreamed that any walk – that anything – could give him so much happiness. In the afternoon he turned his steps towards his nephew’s house.

He passed the door a dozen times, before he had the courage to go up and knock. But he made a dash, and did it:

‘Is your master at home, my dear?’ said Scrooge to the girl. Nice girl! Very.

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Where is he, my love?’ said Scrooge.

‘He’s in the dining-room, sir, along with mistress. I’ll show you up-stairs, if you please.’

‘Thank you. He knows me,’ said Scrooge, with his hand already on the dining-room lock. ‘I’ll go in here, my dear.’

He turned it gently, and sidled his face in, round the door. They were looking at the table (which was spread out in great array); for these young housekeepers are always nervous on such points, and like to see that everything is right.

‘Fred!’ said Scrooge.

Dear heart alive, how his niece by marriage started! Scrooge had forgotten, for the moment, about her sitting in the corner with the footstool, or he wouldn’t have done it, on any account.

‘Why bless my soul!’ cried Fred, ‘who’s that?’

‘It’s I. Your uncle Scrooge. I have come to dinner. Will you let me in, Fred?’

Let him in! It is a mercy he didn’t shake his arm off. He was at home in five minutes. Nothing could be heartier. His niece looked just the same. So did Topper when he came. So did the plump sister when she came. So did every one when they came. Wonderful party, wonderful games, wonderful unanimity, wonderful happiness!

But he was early at the office next morning. Oh, he was early there. If he could only be there first, and catch Bob Cratchit coming late! That was the thing he had set his heart upon.

And he did it; yes, he did! The clock struck nine. No Bob. A quarter past. No Bob. He was full eighteen minutes and a half behind his time. Scrooge sat with his door wide open, that he might see him come into the Tank.

His hat was off, before he opened the door; his comforter too. He was on his stool in a jiffy; driving away with his pen, as if he were trying to overtake nine o'clock.

'Hallo!' growled Scrooge, in his accustomed voice, as near as he could feign it. 'What do you mean by coming here at this time of day?'

'I am very sorry, sir,' said Bob. 'I *am* behind my time.'

'You are!' repeated Scrooge. 'Yes. I think you are. Step this way, sir, if you please.'

'It's only once a year, sir,' pleaded Bob, appearing from the Tank. 'It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, sir.'

'Now, I'll tell you what, my friend,' said Scrooge, 'I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore,' he continued, leaping from his stool, and giving Bob such a dig in the waistcoat that he staggered back into the Tank again; 'and therefore I am about to raise your salary!'

Bob trembled, and got a little nearer to the ruler. He had a momentary idea of knocking Scrooge down with it, holding him, and calling to the people in the court for help and a strait-waistcoat.

'A merry Christmas, Bob!' said Scrooge, with an earnestness that could not be mistaken, as he clapped him on the back. 'A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you for many a year! I'll raise your salary, and endeavour to assist your struggling family, and we will discuss your affairs this very afternoon, over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop[4], Bob! Make up the fires, and buy another coal-scuttle before you dot another i, Bob Cratchit!'

Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father. He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world. Some people laughed to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh, and little heeded them; for he was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe, for good, at which some people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset; and knowing that such as these would be blind anyway, he thought it quite as well that they should wrinkle up their eyes in grins, as have the malady in less attractive forms. His own heart laughed: and that was quite enough for him.

He had no further intercourse with Spirits, but lived upon the Total Abstinence Principle, ever afterwards; and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless Us, Every One!

4. A hot punch made of red wine, oranges, sugar, and spice. The liquid is the same colour as a bishop's cassock; hence the name.

28.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

Stave 1

1. If the purpose of the ghost of Hamlet's father is to incite revenge, what is the purpose of Marley's ghost?
2. What is the thematic significance of the narrator's early insistence on certainty and proof?
3. How is his nephew Fred a foil to Scrooge?
4. How does Scrooge justify his refusal to donate money to the two canvassers?
5. Give some examples of humour in Stave 1.
6. Why is Bob Cratchit expected to show up for work on December 26? In what year did it become a statutory holiday in Britain?
7. Give some examples to demonstrate Scrooge's avarice.
8. What does Scrooge mean when he remarks to Marley's ghost, "You're particular for a shade"?
9. How do the ghost and Scrooge hold opposing views on the purpose of life?
10. At what different times does Marley tell Scrooge the three ghosts will arrive?

Stave 2

1. Give an example or two of the ghost's playing devil's advocate and Scrooge correcting him.
2. Why does Scrooge resent Fred?
3. Why does Scrooge's fiancée release him from the engagement?
4. What do the child-man images, especially with the Ghost of Christmas Past, symbolize? See especially, "I should have liked…to have had the lightest licence of a child, and yet been man enough to know its value." [cf. Wordsworth, "The child is father of the man…Matthew 18:3.]
5. Who is Belle? You might use the word search function if you are using an e-text.

Stave 3

1. What is the autobiographical connection to the Cratchit family's living in Camden Town? (See the brief biography that precedes the text of *A Christmas Carol*.)
2. Describe the Ghost of Christmas Present. How does he differ from the first spirit?
3. How does Scrooge reproach this spirit before they visit the Cratchit home?
4. Under what condition will the prophecy of Tiny Tim's death come to pass?
5. What is ironic about the ghost's words to Scrooge regarding the surplus population?
6. What is the effect of the short descriptions of the miners and the sailors?
7. How does the scene at Fred's party echo the scene at the Cratchit family dinner?
8. Whose offspring are the boy Ignorance and the girl Want?

Stave 4

1. How does the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come differ in appearance from the two other ghosts?
2. What do the charwoman, the laundress, and the undertaker's man have in common with Scrooge?
3. Why is the charwoman Mrs. Dilber's role expanded in the 1951 film?
4. What is the ironic purpose of the scene with Caroline and her husband?
5. What is the green place to which Bob refers?
6. What lines in this scene strike you as overly sentimental? (cf. Oscar Wilde's apocryphal aphorism, "'One would have to have a heart of stone to read the death of little Nell without dissolving into tears…of laughter." Little Nell is the impossibly good child in Dickens's novel *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841).

Stave 5

1. Does the subtitle of Stave 5 have a double meaning?
2. How is the apparent contradiction in the last question of Stanza 1 resolved after Scrooge learns what day it is?
3. Does the reborn Scrooge hesitate to spend on himself as well as on others?
4. What does Scrooge say to the canvasser that he rebuffed in his counting house?
5. What does Scrooge fear when he asks to be admitted to Fred's party?
6. What is the first kindness that Scrooge shows to Bob Cratchit on Boxing Day?

Essay Topics and Activities

- View both the 1935 and 1984 film adaptations of *A Christmas Carol*. Then write a short paper (750 to 1,000 words) contrasting the same scene in each version. Which version does a better job in terms of atmosphere, characterization, or theme? If you prefer to gain access to the 1951 version, then substitute it for either the 1935 or 1984 versions.
- Write a research essay of 1,500 to 2,500 words showing how Dickens criticizes contemporary attitudes to the poor. Be sure to consider the ideas of Thomas Malthus and those of the Sabbatarians. For Malthus, begin with the footnotes 8 and 9 in Stave 1 of your edition. For Sabbatarianism, see George Landow's article.
- Then read the following excerpt from Dickens's account of his visit to a London workhouse on May 5, 1850. His article, "A Walk in a Workhouse," appeared in his *Household Words* magazine on May 25.
- Compare and contrast the early story of Gabriel Grub in Chapter 29 of *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* ("The Story of the Goblins Who Stole a Sexton") with *A Christmas Carol*. Limit your topic to theme, characterization, or another element of fiction.
- There is also an audio adaptation of "The Story of the Goblins Who Stole a Sexton".

Resources

- Dickens in Context
- The origins of A Christmas Carol

QR Code Christmas Carol

VI

Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)

29.

Biography



Figure 1: Christina Rossetti.

On December 5, 1830, Christina Rossetti was born in London, England, one of four children of Italian parents. Her father was the poet Gabriele Rossetti; her brother Dante Gabriel Rossetti also became a poet and a painter. Rossetti's first poems were written in 1842 and printed in the private press of her grandfather. In 1850, under the pseudonym Ellen Alleyne, she contributed seven poems to the Pre-Raphaelite journal *The Germ,* which had been founded by her brother William Michael and his friends.

Rossetti is best known for her ballads and her mystic religious lyrics. Her poetry is marked by symbolism and intense feeling. Rossetti's best-known work, *Goblin Market and Other Poems,* was published in 1862. The collection established Rossetti as a significant voice in Victorian poetry. *The Prince's Progress and Other Poems* appeared in 1866 and was followed by *Sing-Song,* a collection of verse for children, in 1872 (with illustrations by Arthur Hughes).

By the 1880s, recurrent bouts of Graves' disease, a thyroid disorder, made Rossetti an invalid and ended her attempts to work as a governess. While the illness restricted her social life, she continued to write poems. Among her later works were *A Pageant and Other Poems* (1881), and The *Face of the Deep* (1892). Rossetti also wrote religious prose works, such as *Seek and Find* (1879), *Called to Be Saints* (1881), and *The Face of the Deep* (1892). In 1891, Rossetti developed cancer, of which she died in London on December 29, 1894. Rossetti's brother, William Michael, edited her collected works in 1904, but the *Complete Poems* were not published until 1979.

Christina Rossetti is increasingly being reconsidered a major Victorian poet. She has been compared to Emily Dickinson, but the similarity is more in the choice of spiritual topics than in poetic approach,

Rossetti's poetry being one of intense feelings, and her technique refined within the forms established in her time.

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30.

Goblin Market

Christina Rossetti

Morning and evening
Maids heard the goblins cry:
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy:
Apples and quinces,
Lemons and oranges,
Plump unpecked cherries,
Melons and raspberries,
Bloom-down-cheeked peaches,
Swart-headed mulberries,
Wild free-born cranberries,
Crab-apples, dewberries,
Pine-apples, blackberries,
Apricots, strawberries;—
All ripe together
In summer weather,—
Morns that pass by,
Fair eves that fly;
Come buy, come buy:
Our grapes fresh from the vine,
Pomegranates full and fine,
Dates and sharp bullaces[1],
Rare pears and greengages,
[4]Damsons and bilberries,
Taste them and try:
Currants and gooseberries,
Bright-fire-like barberries[2],
Figs to fill your mouth,
Citrons from the South,
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye;
Come buy, come buy."
  Evening by evening
Among the brookside rushes,
Laura bowed her head to hear,
Lizzie veiled her blushes:

1. Bullaces, greengages, damsons are all varieties of plum. A bilberry resembles a blueberry.
2. Oblong red berries of a barberry shrub.

Crouching close together
In the cooling weather,
With clasping arms and cautioning lips,
With tingling cheeks and finger-tips.
“Lie close,” Laura said,
Pricking up her golden head:
“We must not look at goblin men,
We must not buy their fruits:
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry thirsty roots?”
“Come buy,” call the goblins
Hobbling down the glen.
“O,” cried Lizzie, “Laura, Laura,
You should not peep at goblin men.”
Lizzie covered up her eyes,
Covered close lest they should look;
Laura reared her glossy head,
[5]And whispered like the restless brook:
“Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,
Down the glen tramp little men.
One hauls a basket,
One bears a plate,
One lugs a golden dish
Of many pounds’ weight.
How fair the vine must grow
Whose grapes are so luscious;
How warm the wind must blow
Through those fruit bushes.”
“No,” said Lizzie, “no, no, no;
Their offers should not charm us,
Their evil gifts would harm us.”
She thrust a dimpled finger
In each ear, shut eyes and ran:
Curious Laura chose to linger
Wondering at each merchant man.
One had a cat’s face,
One whisked a tail,
One tramped at a rat’s pace,
One crawled like a snail,
One like a wombat[3] prowled obtuse and furry,
One like a ratel[4] tumbled hurry-scurry.
She heard a voice like voice of doves
Cooing all together:

3. A burrowing marsupial resembling a small bear.
4. A nocturnal animal resembling a badger. Pronounced “ray-tell.”

They sounded kind and full of loves
In the pleasant weather.
Laura stretched her gleaming neck
[6]Like a rush-imbedded swan,
Like a lily from the beck[5],
Like a moonlit poplar branch,
Like a vessel at the launch
When its last restraint is gone.
Backwards up the mossy glen
Turned and trooped the goblin men,
With their shrill repeated cry,
“Come buy, come buy.”
When they reached where Laura was
They stood stock still upon the moss,
Leering at each other,
Brother with queer brother;
Signalling each other,
Brother with sly brother.
One set his basket down,
One reared his plate;
One began to weave a crown
Of tendrils, leaves, and rough nuts brown
(Men sell not such in any town);
One heaved the golden weight
Of dish and fruit to offer her:
“Come buy, come buy,” was still their cry.
Laura stared but did not stir,
Longed but had no money:
The whisk-tailed merchant bade her taste
In tones as smooth as honey,
The cat-faced purr’d,
The rat-paced spoke a word
[7]Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard;
One parrot-voiced and jolly
Cried “Pretty Goblin” still for “Pretty Polly”;—
One whistled like a bird.
But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste:
“Good folk, I have no coin;
To take were to purloin:
I have no copper in my purse,
I have no silver either,
And all my gold is on the furze
That shakes in windy weather
Above the rusty heather.”
“You have much gold upon your head,”

5. A small brook.

They answered altogether:
"Buy from us with a golden curl."
She clipped a precious golden lock,
She dropped a tear more rare than pearl,
Then sucked their fruit globes fair or red:
Sweeter than honey from the rock[6],
Stronger than man-rejoicing wine,
Clearer than water flowed that juice;
She never tasted such before,
How should it cloy with length of use?
She sucked and sucked and sucked the more
Fruits which that unknown orchard bore;
She sucked until her lips were sore;
Then flung the emptied rinds away,
But gathered up one kernel stone,
And knew not was it night or day
As she turned home alone.
[8]Lizzie met her at the gate
Full of wise upbraidings:
"Dear, you should not stay so late,
Twilight is not good for maidens;
Should not loiter in the glen
In the haunts of goblin men.
Do you not remember Jeanie,
How she met them in the moonlight,
Took their gifts both choice and many,
Ate their fruits and wore their flowers
Plucked from bowers
Where summer ripens at all hours?
But ever in the noonlight
She pined and pined away;
Sought them by night and day,
Found them no more, but dwindled and grew gray,
Then fell with the first snow,
While to this day no grass will grow
Where she lies low:
I planted daisies there a year ago
That never blow.
You should not loiter so."
"Nay, hush," said Laura:
"Nay, hush, my sister:
I ate and ate my fill,
Yet my mouth waters still;
To-morrow night I will
Buy more,"—and kissed her.

6. cf. Deuteronomy 32:13, "...suck honey out of the rock."

"Have done with sorrow;
I'll bring you plums to-morrow
[9]Fresh on their mother twigs,
Cherries worth getting;
You cannot think what figs
My teeth have met in,
What melons icy-cold
Piled on a dish of gold
Too huge for me to hold,
What peaches with a velvet nap,
Pellucid grapes without one seed:
Odorous indeed must be the mead
Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they drink,
With lilies at the brink,
And sugar-sweet their sap."
Golden head by golden head,
Like two pigeons in one nest
Folded in each other's wings,
They lay down in their curtained bed:
Like two blossoms on one stem,
Like two flakes of new-fallen snow,
Like two wands of ivory
Tipped with gold for awful kings.
Moon and stars gazed in at them,
Wind sang to them lullaby,
Lumbering owls forbore to fly,
Not a bat flapped to and fro
Round their rest:
Cheek to cheek and breast to breast
Locked together in one nest.
[10]Early in the morning
When the first cock crowed his warning,
Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,
Laura rose with Lizzie:
Fetched in honey, milked the cows,
Aired and set to rights the house,
Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,
Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,
Next churned butter, whipped up cream,
Fed their poultry, sat and sewed;
Talked as modest maidens should:
Lizzie with an open heart,
Laura in an absent dream,
One content, one sick in part;
One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,
One longing for the night.
At length slow evening came:

They went with pitchers to the reedy brook;
Lizzie most placid in her look,
Laura most like a leaping flame.
They drew the gurgling water from its deep;
Lizzie plucked purple and rich golden flags[7],
Then turning homeward said: “The sunset flushes
Those furthest loftiest crags;
Come, Laura, not another maiden lags,
No wilful squirrel wags,
The beasts and birds are fast asleep.”
But Laura loitered still among the rushes
And said the bank was steep.
[11]And said the hour was early still,
The dew not fallen, the wind not chill:
Listening ever, but not catching
The customary cry,
“Come buy, come buy,”
With its iterated jingle
Of sugar-baited words:
Not for all her watching
Once discerning even one goblin
Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling;
Let alone the herds
That used to tramp along the glen,
In groups or single,
Of brisk fruit-merchant men.
    Till Lizzie urged: “O Laura, come;
I hear the fruit-call, but I dare not look:
You should not loiter longer at this brook:
Come with me home.
The stars rise, the moon bends her arc,
Each glow-worm winks her spark,
Let us get home before the night grows dark;
For clouds may gather
Though this is summer weather,
Put out the lights and drench us through;
Then if we lost our way what should we do?”
    Laura turned cold as stone
To find her sister heard that cry alone,
That goblin cry,
[12]”Come buy our fruits, come buy.”
Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit?
Must she no more such succous[8] pasture find,
Gone deaf and blind?

7. Irises.
8. Succulent.

Her tree of life drooped from the root:
She said not one word in her heart's sore ache;
But peering thro' the dimness, naught discerning,
Trudged home, her pitcher dripping all the way;
So crept to bed, and lay
Silent till Lizzie slept;
Then sat up in a passionate yearning,
And gnashed her teeth for balked desire, and wept
As if her heart would break.
Day after day, night after night,
Laura kept watch in vain,
In sullen silence of exceeding pain.
She never caught again the goblin cry:
"Come buy, come buy";—
She never spied the goblin men
Hawking their fruits along the glen:
But when the noon waxed bright
Her hair grew thin and gray;
She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn
To swift decay, and burn
Her fire away.
One day remembering her kernel-stone
She set it by a wall that faced the south;
Dewed it with tears, hoped for a root,
[13]Watched for a waxing shoot,
But there came none;
It never saw the sun,
It never felt the trickling moisture run:
While with sunk eyes and faded mouth
She dreamed of melons, as a traveller sees
False waves in desert drouth
With shade of leaf-crowned trees,
And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.
She no more swept the house,
Tended the fowls or cows,
Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,
Brought water from the brook:
But sat down listless in the chimney-nook
And would not eat.
Tender Lizzie could not bear
To watch her sister's cankerous care,
Yet not to share.
She night and morning
Caught the goblins' cry:
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy."
Beside the brook, along the glen,

She heard the tramp of goblin men,
The voice and stir
Poor Laura could not hear;
Longed to buy fruit to comfort her,
But feared to pay too dear.
[14]She thought of Jeanie in her grave,
Who should have been a bride;
But who for joys brides hope to have
Fell sick and died
In her gay prime,
In earliest winter-time,
With the first glazing rime,
With the first snow-fall of crisp winter-time.
Till Laura, dwindling,
Seemed knocking at Death’s door:
Then Lizzie weighed[9] no more
Better and worse,
But put a silver penny in her purse,
Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with clumps of furze
At twilight, halted by the brook;
And for the first time in her life
Began to listen and look.
Laughed every goblin
When they spied her peeping:
Came towards her hobbling,
Flying, running, leaping,
Puffing and blowing,
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,
Clucking and gobbling,
Mopping and mowing,
Full of airs and graces,
Pulling wry faces,
Demure grimaces,
[15]Cat-like and rat-like,
Ratel and wombat-like,
Snail-paced in a hurry,
Parrot-voiced and whistler,
Helter-skelter, hurry-skurry,
Chattering like magpies,
Fluttering like pigeons,
Gliding like fishes,—
Hugged her and kissed her;
Squeezed and caressed her;
Stretched up their dishes,
Panniers and plates:

9. Considered.

"Look at our apples
Russet and dun,
Bob at our cherries,
Bite at our peaches,
Citrons and dates,
Grapes for the asking,
Pears red with basking
Out in the sun,
Plums on their twigs;
Pluck them and suck them,
Pomegranates, figs."
"Good folk," said Lizzie,
Mindful of Jeanie,
"Give me much and many";—
Held out her apron,
Tossed them her penny.
"Nay, take a seat with us,
[16]Honor and eat with us,"
They answered grinning:
"Our feast is but beginning.
Night yet is early,
Warm and dew-pearly,
Wakeful and starry:
Such fruits as these
No man can carry;
Half their bloom would fly,
Half their dew would dry,
Half their flavor would pass by.
Sit down and feast with us,
Be welcome guest with us,
Cheer you and rest with us."
"Thank you," said Lizzie; "but one waits
At home alone for me:
So, without further parleying,
If you will not sell me any
Of your fruits though much and many,
Give me back my silver penny
I tossed you for a fee."
They began to scratch their pates,
No longer wagging, purring,
But visibly demurring,
Grunting and snarling.
One called her proud,
Cross-grained, uncivil;
Their tones waxed loud,
Their looks were evil.
Lashing their tails

[17]They trod and hustled her,
Elbowed and jostled her,
Clawed with their nails,
Barking, mewing, hissing, mocking,
Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,
Twitched her hair out by the roots,
Stamped upon her tender feet,
Held her hands and squeezed their fruits
Against her mouth to make her eat.
  White and golden Lizzie stood,
Like a lily in a flood,—
Like a rock of blue-veined stone
Lashed by tides obstreperously,—
Like a beacon left alone
In a hoary roaring sea,
Sending up a golden fire,—
Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree
White with blossoms honey-sweet
Sore beset by wasp and bee,—
Like a royal virgin town
Topped with gilded dome and spire
Close beleaguered by a fleet
Mad to tug her standard down.
  One may lead a horse to water,
Twenty cannot make him drink.
Though the goblins cuffed and caught her,
Coaxed and fought her,
Bullied and besought her,
[18]Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,
Kicked and knocked her,
Mauled and mocked her,
Lizzie uttered not a word;
Would not open lip from lip
Lest they should cram a mouthful in;
But laughed in heart to feel the drip
Of juice that syrupped all her face,
And lodged in dimples of her chin,
And streaked her neck which quaked like curd.
At last the evil people,
Worn out by her resistance,
Flung back her penny, kicked their fruit
Along whichever road they took,
Not leaving root or stone or shoot.
Some writhed into the ground,
Some dived into the brook
With ring and ripple,

Some scudded on the gale without a sound,
Some vanished in the distance.
In a smart, ache, tingle,
Lizzie went her way;
Knew not was it night or day;
Sprang up the bank, tore through the furze,
Threaded copse and dingle,
And heard her penny jingle
Bouncing in her purse,—
Its bounce was music to her ear.
She ran and ran
[19]As if she feared some goblin man
Dogged her with gibe or curse
Or something worse:
But not one goblin skurried after,
Nor was she pricked by fear;
The kind heart made her windy-paced
That urged her home quite out of breath with haste
And inward laughter.
She cried "Laura," up the garden,
"Did you miss me?
Come and kiss me.
Never mind my bruises,
Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,
Goblin pulp and goblin dew.
Eat me, drink me, love me;
Laura, make much of me:
For your sake I have braved the glen
And had to do with goblin merchant men."
Laura started from her chair,
Flung her arms up in the air,
Clutched her hair:
"Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted
For my sake the fruit forbidden?
Must your light like mine be hidden,
Your young life like mine be wasted,
Undone in mine undoing
And ruined in my ruin,
[20]Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden?"
She clung about her sister,
Kissed and kissed and kissed her:
Tears once again
Refreshed her shrunken eyes,
Dropping like rain
After long sultry drouth;

Shaking with aguish[10] fear, and pain,
She kissed and kissed her with a hungry mouth.
  Her lips began to scorch,
That juice was wormwood to her tongue,
She loathed the feast:
Writhing as one possessed she leaped and sung,
Rent all her robe, and wrung
Her hands in lamentable haste,
And beat her breast.
Her locks streamed like the torch
Borne by a racer at full speed,
Or like the mane of horses in their flight,
Or like an eagle when she stems the light
Straight toward the sun,
Or like a caged thing freed,
Or like a flying flag when armies run.
  Swift fire spread through her veins, knocked at her heart,
Met the fire smouldering there
And overbore its lesser flame;
She gorged on bitterness without a name:
[21]Ah! fool, to choose such part
Of soul-consuming care!
Sense failed in the mortal strife:
Like the watch-tower of a town
Which an earthquake shatters down,
Like a lightning-stricken mast,
Like a wind-uprooted tree
Spun about,
Like a foam-topped water-spout
Cast down headlong in the sea,
She fell at last;
Pleasure past and anguish past,
Is it death or is it life?
  Life out of death.
That night long Lizzie watched by her,
Counted her pulse’s flagging stir,
Felt for her breath,
Held water to her lips, and cooled her face
With tears and fanning leaves:
But when the first birds chirped about their eaves,
And early reapers plodded to the place
Of golden sheaves,
And dew-wet grass
Bowed in the morning winds so brisk to pass,
And new buds with new day

10. Feverish.

Opened of cup-like lilies on the stream,
Laura awoke as from a dream,
Laughed in the innocent old way,
Hugged Lizzie but not twice or thrice;
[22]Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of gray,
Her breath was sweet as May,
And light danced in her eyes.
  Days, weeks, months, years
Afterwards, when both were wives
With children of their own;
Their mother-hearts beset with fears,
Their lives bound up in tender lives;
Laura would call the little ones
And tell them of her early prime,
Those pleasant days long gone
Of not-returning time:
Would talk about the haunted glen,
The wicked, quaint[11] fruit-merchant men,
Their fruits like honey to the throat,
But poison in the blood;
(Men sell not such in any town;)
Would tell them how her sister stood
In deadly peril to do her good,
And win the fiery antidote:
Then joining hands to little hands
Would bid them cling together,
"For there is no friend like a sister,
In calm or stormy weather,
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands."
—1859

11. Strange.

31.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

John Keats's "The Eve of St. Agnes."

Look at John Keats's "The Eve of St. Agnes." What influence do you think this poem had on Rossetti, especially with regard to style and imagery? See especially Stanza 30, Porphyro's magical feast.

1. What does the fruit symbolize"?
2. What is significant about the fact that the goblin men only want to sell the fruit and not give it away?
3. Compare and contrast the two sisters. How are they similar? Different?
4. Describe the imagery in the scene of Laura and the goblin men.
5. When can Laura no longer hear the goblins? Why can she no longer hear the cry?
6. Compare Laura and Jeanie.
7. Why does Laura escape a similar fate?

Essay Questions

1. Download Katja Brandt's 2006 Ph.D. dissertation. Read pages 17 to 23 ("Psychosexual Readings of Goblin Market") or pages 23 to 27 ("Feminist Readings"). Summarize the main points for and against EITHER the psychosexual readings or the feminist readings.
2. This poem is often discussed in the context of the Victorian period and "the Woman Question." Give an interpretation of this poem after reading the main biographical details about Rossetti, (whom the American poet Sara Teasdale characterized as "a born celibate")—especially her piety, her relationship with her sister Maria, and the fact that she renounced two suitors at least in part because of her scruples about the quality of their religious faith.
3. Discuss Christian symbolism in "Goblin Market," especially eucharistic symbolism.
4. Use a good glossary of literary terms to identify epic characteristics, then argue that "Goblin Market" is an epic in miniature or modified "epyllion").
5. Find autobiographical elements in the poem (e.g., her work at the Highgate Home for Fallen Women; her relationship with her sister Maria). You may also wish to consult Brandt's thesis.

6. Summarize the main findings in this essay on capitalist deception, especially in the food industry during the Victorian period:

Resources

- Listen to the 45-minute BBC "In Our Time" podcast on Christina Rossetti. The guest scholars give an excellent overview of Rossetti's life and helpful context for "Goblin Market."
- Listen to Rossetti's poem "In the Bleak Mid-winter" set to music by Gustav Holst in 1906 (with lyrics).

QR Code Bleak Midwinter

- Read this excellent overview of the poem and its contexts. You will find it useful for any of the essay topics.
- Look at the painting by Christina's brother, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, for which she served as the model. Try to find other Pre-Raphaelite paintings posted on the Internet with Rossetti as model.

VII

Henry James (1843–1916)

32.

Biography

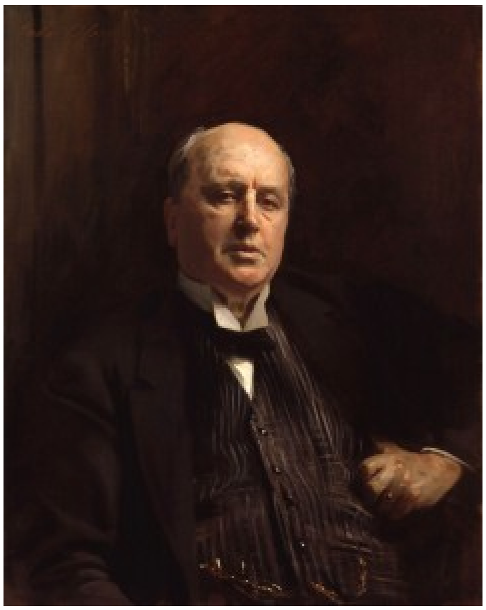


Figure 1: Henry James

Henry James was a fierce defender of the novelistic tradition and of formal complexity. A master of focalization, he showed in works like What Maisie Knew (1897) and The Golden Bowl (1904) the centrality of perspective to a novel's construction. His works explored the encounter between Americans and Europeans, between the innocent and the worldly, between individual, fluid consciousness and the obtuseness of others and the outside world. In his preface to The Golden Bowl, James wrote that the writing and reading of fiction was an ethical project, that "the effort really to see and really to represent is no idle business in face of the constant force that makes for muddlement." Moving from the Victorian melodrama of The American (1877) to the modernist impressionism of The Wings of the Dove (1902), James's entire career was defined by the seriousness with which he took the art of the novel.

James was born on April 15, 1843 in New York City into a family of wealth and intellect. His father, Henry James, Sr., was a leading theologian of the time and friends with Emerson and Thoreau; his older brother, William, would become an important figure in psychology and philosophy; and his sister, Alice, would later become famous as a diarist. Henry moved throughout his childhood, as the young cosmopolite studied in Geneva, Paris, and Bonn, among other cities. He briefly attended Harvard Law School, but decided upon a life of letters instead of the law.

In 1871, James published his first of twenty novels, Watch and Ward. For the next five years, James traveled throughout Europe, working as a contributor for the Nation and Atlantic Monthly, rarely living in the United States. In 1875, Roderick Hudson, a Bildungsroman that contains hints of repressed homosexual longing, appeared serially in the Atlantic. The next year, James moved to Europe. He lived first in Rome, then in Paris, and finally settled in England, where he would live until his death in 1916.

James's early novels had a Transatlantic flavor: The American, Daisy Miller (1879), and The Portrait of a Lady (1881) all featured young, naïve Americans traveling to Europe, where an encounter with corruption and cynicism forced the reconsideration of their own selves and ethical values. Showing James's lasting interest in Balzac and Dickens, these early novels are exemplars of the realist tradition. James tried his hand at drama, primarily from 1890 to 1895, but he failed spectacularly. Critics like Leon Edel have pointed towards the failure of works like The Tragic Muse (1890) as central to James's late style.

As James continued writing, his works became more and more opaque. "Muddlement," the epistemological uncertainty involved in consciousness and the negotiation of everyday social relations, caused a formal change in his novels. James's prose became oblique, a puzzle to be decoded rather than a mirror clearly and simply reflecting reality. The Golden Bowl is a perfect model of this narrative indirectness. The novel treats the complex and adulterous relations between Maggie Verver, her husband Prince Amerigo, and his former mistress Charlotte Stant. The atmosphere is almost claustrophobic in nature. James relentlessly tracks the thoughts of first Amerigo and then Maggie, refusing to give the reader information that his characters are not privy to. One feels trapped within the obsessive minds and machinations of the characters.

James traveled to the United States in 1904-1905 for a lecture tour, but came back to England shortly thereafter. In 1915, he became a British citizen in order to protest the United States' isolationism in the face of World War I. He died in London on February 28, 1916. Unlike T.S. Eliot, another Anglophile, expatriate American modernist, James's remains were returned to the

Media Attributions

33.

Turn of the Screw: Introduction

Henry James

The story had held us, round the fire, sufficiently breathless, but except the obvious remark that it was gruesome, as, on Christmas Eve in an old house, a strange tale should essentially be, I remember no comment uttered till somebody happened to say that it was the only case he had met in which such a visitation had fallen on a child. The case, I may mention, was that of an apparition in just such an old house as had gathered us for the occasion — an appearance, of a dreadful kind, to a little boy sleeping in the room with his mother and waking her up in the terror of it; waking her not to dissipate his dread and soothe him to sleep again, but to encounter also, herself, before she had succeeded in doing so, the same sight that had shaken him. It was this observation that drew from Douglas — not immediately, but later in the evening — a reply that had the interesting consequence to which I call attention. Someone else told a story not particularly effective, which I saw he was not following. This I took for a sign that he had himself something to produce and that we should only have to wait. We waited in fact till two nights later, but that same evening, before we scattered, he brought out what was in his mind.

"I quite agree — in regard to Griffin's ghost, or whatever it was — that its appearing first to the little boy, at so tender an age, adds a particular touch. But it's not the first occurrence of its charming kind that I know to have involved a child. If the child gives the effect another turn of the screw, what do you say to *two* children — ?"

"We say, of course," somebody exclaimed, "that they give two turns! Also that we want to hear about them."

I can see Douglas there before the fire, to which he had got up to present his back, looking down at his interlocutor with his hands in his pockets. "Nobody but me, till now, has ever heard. It's quite too horrible." This, naturally, was declared by several voices to give the thing the utmost price, and our friend, with quiet art, prepared his triumph by turning his eyes over the rest of us and going on: "It's beyond everything. Nothing at all that I know touches it."

"For sheer terror?" I remember asking.

He seemed to say it was not so simple as that; to be really at a loss how to qualify it. He passed his hand over his eyes, made a little wincing grimace. "For dreadful — dreadfulness!"

"Oh, how delicious!" cried one of the women.

He took no notice of her; he looked at me, but as if, instead of me, he saw what he spoke of. "For general uncanny ugliness and horror and pain."

"Well then," I said, "just sit right down and begin."

He turned round to the fire, gave a kick to a log, watched it an instant. Then as he faced us again: "I can't begin. I shall have to send to town." There was a unanimous groan at this, and much reproach; after which, in his preoccupied way, he explained. "The story's written. It's in a locked drawer — it has not been out for years. I could write to my man and enclose the key; he could send down the packet as he finds it." It was to me in particular that he appeared to propound this — appeared almost to appeal for aid not to hesitate. He had broken a thickness of ice, the formation of many a winter; had had his reasons for a long silence. The others resented postponement, but it was just his scruples that charmed

me. I adjured him to write by the first post and to agree with us for an early hearing; then I asked him if the experience in question had been his own. To this his answer was prompt. “Oh, thank God, no!”

“And is the record yours? You took the thing down?”

“Nothing but the impression. I took that *here*” — he tapped his heart. “I’ve never lost it.”

“Then your manuscript — ?”

“Is in old, faded ink, and in the most beautiful hand.” He hung fire again. “A woman’s. She has been dead these twenty years. She sent me the pages in question before she died.” They were all listening now, and of course there was somebody to be arch, or at any rate to draw the inference. But if he put the inference by without a smile it was also without irritation. “She was a most charming person, but she was ten years older than I. She was my sister’s governess,” he quietly said. “She was the most agreeable woman I’ve ever known in her position; she would have been worthy of any whatever. It was long ago, and this episode was long before. I was at Trinity[1], and I found her at home on my coming down the second summer. I was much there that year — it was a beautiful one; and we had, in her off-hours, some strolls and talks in the garden — talks in which she struck me as awfully clever and nice. Oh yes; don’t grin: I liked her extremely and am glad to this day to think she liked me, too. If she hadn’t she wouldn’t have told me. She had never told anyone. It wasn’t simply that she said so, but that I knew she hadn’t. I was sure; I could see. You’ll easily judge why when you hear.”

“Because the thing had been such a scare?”

He continued to fix me. “You’ll easily judge,” he repeated: “*you* will.”

I fixed him, too. “I see. She was in love.”

He laughed for the first time. “You *are* acute. Yes, she was in love. That is, she had been. That came out — she couldn’t tell her story without its coming out. I saw it, and she saw I saw it; but neither of us spoke of it. I remember the time and the place — the corner of the lawn, the shade of the great beeches and the long, hot summer afternoon. It wasn’t a scene for a shudder; but oh — !” He quitted the fire and dropped back into his chair.

“You’ll receive the packet Thursday morning?” I inquired.

“Probably not till the second post.”

“Well then; after dinner — ”

“You’ll all meet me here?” He looked us round again. “Isn’t anybody going?” It was almost the tone of hope. “Everybody will stay!”

“*I* will — and *I* will!” cried the ladies whose departure had been fixed. Mrs. Griffin, however, expressed the need for a little more light. “Who was it she was in love with?”

“The story will tell,” I took upon myself to reply.

“Oh, I can’t wait for the story!”

“The story *won’t* tell,” said Douglas; “not in any literal, vulgar way.”

“More’s the pity, then. That’s the only way I ever understand.”

“Won’t you tell, Douglas?” somebody else inquired.

He sprang to his feet again. “Yes — tomorrow. Now I must go to bed. Good night.” And quickly catching up a candlestick, he left us slightly bewildered. From our end of the great brown hall we heard his step on the stair; whereupon Mrs. Griffin spoke. “Well, if I don’t know who she was in love with, I know who *he* was.”

“She was ten years older,” said her husband.

“*Raison de plus*[2]— at that age! But it’s rather nice, his long reticence.”

“Forty years!” Griffin put in.

1. A constituent college of the University of Cambridge, founded by King Henry VIII in 1546.
2. All the more reason.

"With this outbreak at last."

"The outbreak," I returned, "will make a tremendous occasion of Thursday night;" and everyone so agreed with me that, in the light of it, we lost all attention for everything else. The last story, however incomplete and like the mere opening of a serial, had been told; we handshook and "candlestuck," as somebody said, and went to bed.

I knew the next day that a letter containing the key had, by the first post, gone off to his London apartments; but in spite of — or perhaps just on account of — the eventual diffusion of this knowledge we quite let him alone till after dinner, till such an hour of the evening, in fact, as might best accord with the kind of emotion on which our hopes were fixed. Then he became as communicative as we could desire and indeed gave us his best reason for being so. We had it from him again before the fire in the hall, as we had had our mild wonders of the previous night. It appeared that the narrative he had promised to read us really required for a proper intelligence a few words of prologue. Let me say here distinctly, to have done with it, that this narrative, from am exact transcript of my own made much later, is what I shall presently give. Poor Douglas, before his death — when it was in sight — committed to me the manuscript that reached him on the third of these days and that, on the same spot, with immense effect, he began to read to our hushed little circle on the night of the fourth. The departing ladies who had said they would stay didn't, of course, thank heaven, stay: they departed, in consequence of arrangements made, in a rage of curiosity, as they professed, produced by the touches with which he had already worked us up. But that only made his little final auditory more compact and select, kept it, round the hearth, subject to a common thrill.

The first of these touches conveyed that the written statement took up the tale at a point after it had, in a manner, begun. The fact to be in possession of was therefore that his old friend, the youngest of several daughters of a poor country parson, had, at the age of twenty, on taking service for the first time in the schoolroom, come up to London, in trepidation, to answer in person an advertisement that had already placed her in brief correspondence with the advertiser. This person proved, on her presenting herself, for judgment, at a house in Harley Street, that impressed her as vast and imposing — this prospective patron proved a gentleman, a bachelor in the prime of life, such a figure as had never risen, save in a dream or an old novel, before a fluttered, anxious girl out of a Hampshire vicarage. One could easily fix this type; it never, happily, dies out. He was handsome and bold and pleasant, offhand and gay and kind. He struck her, inevitably, as gallant and splendid, but what took her most of all and gave her the courage she afterward showed was that he put the whole thing to her as a kind of favor, an obligation he should gratefully incur. She conceived him as rich, but as fearfully extravagant — saw him all in a glow of high fashion, of good looks, of expensive habits, of charming ways with women. He had for his own town residence a big house filled with the spoils of travel and the trophies of the chase; but it was to his country home, an old family place in Essex, that he wished her immediately to proceed.

He had been left, by the death of their parents in India, guardian to a small nephew and a small niece, children of a younger, a military brother, whom he had lost two years before. These children were, by the strangest of chances for a man in his position — a lone man without the right sort of experience or a gram of patience — very heavily on his hands. It had all been a great worry and, on his own part doubtless, a series of blunders, but he immensely pitied the poor chicks and had done all he could; had in particular sent them down to his other house, the proper place for them being of course the country, and kept them there, from the first, with the best people he could find to look after them, parting even with his own servants to wait on them and going down himself, whenever he might, to see how they were doing. The awkward thing was that they had practically no other relations and that his own affairs took up all his time. He had put them in possession of Bly, which was healthy and secure, and had placed at the head of their little establishment — but below stairs only — an excellent woman, Mrs. Grose, whom he was sure his visitor would like and who had formerly been maid to his mother. She was now housekeeper and was

also acting for the time as superintendent to the little girl, of whom, without children of her own, she was, by good luck, extremely fond. There were plenty of people to help, but of course the young lady who should go down as governess would be in supreme authority. She would also have, in holidays, to look after the small boy, who had been for a term at school — young as he was to be sent, but what else could be done? — and who, as the holidays were about to begin, would be back from one day to the other. There had been for the two children at first a young lady whom they had had the misfortune to lose. She had done for them quite beautifully — she was a most respectable person — till her death, the great awkwardness of which had, precisely, left no alternative but the school for little Miles. Mrs. Grose, since then, in the way of manners and doings, had done as she could for Flora; and there were, further, a cook, a housemaid, a dairywoman, an old pony, an old groom, and an old gardener, all likewise thoroughly respectable.

So far had Douglas presented his picture when someone put a question. "And what did the former governess die of? — of so much respectability?"

Our friend's answer was prompt. "That will come out. I don't anticipate."

"Excuse me — I thought that was just what you *are* doing."

"In her successor's place," I suggested, "I should have wished to learn if the office brought with it — "

"Necessary danger to life?" Douglas completed my thought. "She did wish to learn, and she did learn. You shall hear tomorrow what she learned. Meanwhile, of course, the prospect struck her as slightly grim. She was young, untried, nervous: it was a vision of serious duties and little company, of really great loneliness. She hesitated — took a couple of days to consult and consider. But the salary offered much exceeded her modest measure, and on a second interview she faced the music, she engaged." And Douglas, with this, made a pause that, for the benefit of the company, moved me to throw in —

"The moral of which was of course the seduction exercised by the splendid young man. She succumbed to it."

He got up and, as he had done the night before, went to the fire, gave a stir to a log with his foot, then stood a moment with his back to us. "She saw him only twice."

"Yes, but that's just the beauty of her passion."

A little to my surprise, on this, Douglas turned round to me. "It *was* the beauty of it. There were others," he went on, "who hadn't succumbed. He told her frankly all his difficulty — that for several applicants the conditions had been prohibitive. They were, somehow, simply afraid. It sounded dull — it sounded strange; and all the more so because of his main condition."

"Which was — ?"

"That she should never trouble him — but never, never: neither appeal nor complain nor write about anything; only meet all questions herself, receive all moneys from his solicitor, take the whole thing over and let him alone. She promised to do this, and she mentioned to me that when, for a moment, disburdened, delighted, he held her hand, thanking her for the sacrifice, she already felt rewarded.

"But was that all her reward?" one of the ladies asked.

"She never saw him again."

"Oh!" said the lady; which, as our friend immediately left us again, was the only other word of importance contributed to the subject till, the next night, by the corner of the hearth, in the best chair, he opened the faded red cover of a thin old-fashioned gilt-edged album. The whole thing took indeed more nights than one, but on the first occasion the same lady put another question. "What is your title?"

"I haven't one."

"Oh, *I* have!" I said. But Douglas, without heeding me, had begun to read with a fine clearness that was like a rendering to the ear of the beauty of his author's hand.

34.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 1

Henry James

I remember the whole beginning as a succession of flights and drops, a little seesaw of the right throbs and the wrong. After rising, in town, to meet his appeal, I had at all events a couple of very bad days — found myself doubtful again, felt indeed sure I had made a mistake. In this state of mind I spent the long hours of bumping, swinging coach that carried me to the stopping place at which I was to be met by a vehicle from the house. This convenience, I was told, had been ordered, and I found, toward the close of the June afternoon, a commodious fly[1] in waiting for me. Driving at that hour, on a lovely day, through a country to which the summer sweetness seemed to offer me a friendly welcome, my fortitude mounted afresh and, as we turned into the avenue, encountered a reprieve that was probably but a proof of the point to which it had sunk. I suppose I had expected, or had dreaded, something so melancholy that what greeted me was a good surprise. I remember as a most pleasant impression the broad, clear front, its open windows and fresh curtains and the pair of maids looking out; I remember the lawn and the bright flowers and the crunch of my wheels on the gravel and the clustered treetops over which the rooks circled and cawed in the golden sky. The scene had a greatness that made it a different affair from my own scant home, and there immediately appeared at the door, with a little girl in her hand, a civil person who dropped me as decent a curtsy as if I had been the mistress or a distinguished visitor. I had received in Harley Street a narrower notion of the place, and that, as I recalled it, made me think the proprietor still more of a gentleman, suggested that what I was to enjoy might be something beyond his promise.

I had no drop again till the next day, for I was carried triumphantly through the following hours by my introduction to the younger of my pupils. The little girl who accompanied Mrs. Grose appeared to me on the spot a creature so charming as to make it a great fortune to have to do with her. She was the most beautiful child I had ever seen, and I afterward wondered that my employer had not told me more of her. I slept little that night — I was too much excited; and this astonished me, too, I recollect, remained with me, adding to my sense of the liberality with which I was treated. The large, impressive room, one of the best in the house, the great state bed, as I almost felt it, the full, figured draperies, the long glasses in which, for the first time, I could see myself from head to foot, all struck me — like the extraordinary charm of my small charge — as so many things thrown in. It was thrown in as well, from the first moment, that I should get on with Mrs. Grose in a relation over which, on my way, in the coach, I fear I had rather brooded. The only thing indeed that in this early outlook might have made me shrink again was the clear circumstance of her being so glad to see me. I perceived within half an hour that she was so glad — stout, simple, plain, clean, wholesome woman — as to be positively on her guard against showing it too much. I wondered even then a little why she should wish not to show it, and that, with reflection, with suspicion, might of course have made me uneasy.

But it was a comfort that there could be no uneasiness in a connection with anything so beatific as the radiant image of my little girl, the vision of whose angelic beauty had probably more than anything else

1. A spacious carriage.

to do with me restlessness that, before morning, made me several times rise and wander about my room to take in the whole picture and prospect; to watch, from my open window, the faint summer dawn, to look at such portions of the rest of the house as I could catch, and to listen, while, in the fading dusk, the first birds began to twitter, for the possible recurrence of a sound or two, less natural and not without, but within, that I had fancied I heard. There had been a moment when I believed I recognized, faint and far, the cry of a child; there had been another when I found myself just consciously starting as at the passage, before my door, of a light footstep. But these fancies were not marked enough not to be thrown off, and it is only in the light, or the gloom, I should rather say, of other and subsequent matters that they now come back to me. To watch, teach, "form" little Flora would too evidently be the making of a happy and useful life. It had been agreed between us downstairs that after this first occasion I should have her as a matter of course at night, her small white bed being already arranged, to that end, in my room. What I had undertaken was the whole care of her, and she had remained, just this last time, with Mrs. Grose only as an effect of our consideration for my inevitable strangeness and her natural timidity. In spite of this timidity — which the child herself, in the oddest way in the world, had been perfectly frank and brave about, allowing it, without a sign of uncomfortable consciousness, with the deep, sweet serenity indeed of one of Raphael's[2] holy infants, to be discussed, to be imputed to her, and to determine us — I felt quite sure she would presently like me. It was part of what I already liked Mrs. Grose herself for, the pleasure I could see her feel in my admiration and wonder as I sat at supper with four tall candles and with my pupil, in a high chair and a bib, brightly facing me, between them, over bread and milk. There were naturally things that in Flora's presence could pass between us only as prodigious and gratified looks, obscure and roundabout allusions.

"And the little boy — does he look like her? Is he too so very remarkable?"

One wouldn't flatter a child. "Oh, miss, *most* remarkable. If you think well of this one!" — and she stood there with a plate in her hand, beaming at our companion, who looked from one of us to the other with placid heavenly eyes that contained nothing to check us.

"Yes; if I do — ?"

"You *will* be carried away by the little gentleman!"

"Well, that, I think, is what I came for — to be carried away. I'm afraid, however," I remember feeling the impulse to add, "I'm rather easily carried away. I was carried away in London!"

I can still see Mrs. Grose's broad face as she took this in. "In Harley Street?"

"In Harley Street."

"Well, miss, you're not the first — and you won't be the last."

"Oh, I've no pretension," I could laugh, "to being the only one. My other pupil, at any rate, as I understand, comes back tomorrow?"

"Not tomorrow — Friday, miss. He arrives, as you did, by the coach, under care of the guard, and is to be met by the same carriage."

I forthwith expressed that the proper as well as the pleasant and friendly thing would be therefore that on the arrival of the public conveyance I should be in waiting for him with his little sister; an idea in which Mrs. Grose concurred so heartily that I somehow took her manner as a kind of comforting pledge — never falsified, thank heaven! — that we should on every question be quite at one. Oh, she was glad I was there!

What I felt the next day was, I suppose, nothing that could be fairly called a reaction from the cheer of my arrival; it was probably at the most only a slight oppression produced by a fuller measure of the scale, as I walked round them, gazed up at them, took them in, of my new circumstances. They had,

2. Raffaello Sanzio (1483-1520). Italian painter of the High Renaissance. His "Madonna of the Goldfinch" depicts two children: Christ and John the Baptist, admiring a bird under Mary's gaze.

as it were, an extent and mass for which I had not been prepared and in the presence of which I found myself, freshly, a little scared as well as a little proud. Lessons, in this agitation, certainly suffered some delay; I reflected that my first duty was, by the gentlest arts I could contrive, to win the child into the sense of knowing me. I spent the day with her out-of-doors; I arranged with her, to her great satisfaction, that it should be she, she only, who might show me the place. She showed it step by step and room by room and secret by secret, with droll, delightful, childish talk about it and with the result, in half an hour, of our becoming immense friends. Young as she was, I was struck, throughout our little tour, with her confidence and courage with the way, in empty chambers and dull corridors, on crooked staircases that made me pause and even on the summit of an old machicolated[3] square tower that made me dizzy, her morning music, her disposition to tell me so many more things than she asked, rang out and led me on. I have not seen Bly since the day I left it, and I daresay that to my older and more informed eyes it would now appear sufficiently contracted. But as my little conductress, with her hair of gold and her frock of blue, danced before me round corners and pattered down passages, I had the view of a castle of romance inhabited by a rosy sprite, such a place as would somehow, for diversion of the young idea, take all color out of storybooks and fairytales. Wasn't it just a storybook over which I had fallen adoze and adream? No; it was a big, ugly, antique, but convenient house, embodying a few features of a building still older, half-replaced and half-utilized, in which I had the fancy of our being almost as lost as a handful of passengers in a great drifting ship. Well, I was, strangely, at the helm!

3. An opening in a projecting wall from which stones or boiling water could be dropped upon invaders.

35.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 2

Henry James

This came home to me when, two days later, I drove over with Flora to meet, as Mrs. Grose said, the little gentleman; and all the more for an incident that, presenting itself the second evening, had deeply disconcerted me. The first day had been, on the whole, as I have expressed, reassuring; but I was to see it wind up in keen apprehension. The postbag, that evening — it came late — contained a letter for me, which, however, in the hand of my employer, I found to be composed but of a few words enclosing another, addressed to himself, with a seal still unbroken. "This, I recognize, is from the headmaster, and the headmaster's an awful bore. Read him, please; deal with him; but mind you don't report. Not a word. I'm off!" I broke the seal with a great effort — so great a one that I was a long time coming to it; took the unopened missive at last up to my room and only attacked it just before going to bed. I had better have let it wait till morning, for it gave me a second sleepless night. With no counsel to take, the next day, I was full of distress; and it finally got so the better of me that I determined to open myself at least to Mrs. Grose.

"What does it mean? The child's dismissed his school."

She gave me a look that I remarked at the moment; then, visibly, with a quick blankness, seemed to try to take it back. "But aren't they all — ?"

"Sent home — yes. But only for the holidays. Miles may never go back at all."

Consciously, under my attention, she reddened. "They won't take him?"

"They absolutely decline."

At this she raised her eyes, which she had turned from me; I saw them fill with good tears. "What has he done?"

I hesitated; then I judged best simply to hand her my letter — which, however, had the effect of making her, without taking it, simply put her hands behind her. She shook her head sadly. "Such things are not for me, miss."

My counselor couldn't read! I winced at my mistake, which I attenuated as I could, and opened my letter again to repeat it to her; then, faltering in the act and folding it up once more, I put it back in my pocket. "Is he really *bad?*"

The tears were still in her eyes. "Do the gentlemen say so?"

"They go into no particulars. They simply express their regret that it should be impossible to keep him. That can have only one meaning." Mrs. Grose listened with dumb emotion; she forbore to ask me what this meaning might be; so that, presently, to put the thing with some coherence and with the mere aid of her presence to my own mind, I went on: "That he's an injury to the others."

At this, with one of the quick turns of simple folk, she suddenly flamed up. "Master Miles! *him* an injury?"

There was such a flood of good faith in it that, though I had not yet seen the child, my very fears made me jump to the absurdity of the idea. I found myself, to meet my friend the better, offering it, on the spot, sarcastically. "To his poor little innocent mates!"

"It's too dreadful," cried Mrs. Grose, "to say such cruel things! Why, he's scarce ten years old."

"Yes, yes; it would be incredible."

She was evidently grateful for such a profession. "See him, miss, first. *Then* believe it!" I felt forthwith a new impatience to see him; it was the beginning of a curiosity that, for all the next hours, was to deepen almost to pain. Mrs. Grose was aware, I could judge, of what she had produced in me, and she followed it up with assurance. "You might as well believe it of the little lady. Bless her," she added the next moment — "*look* at her!"

I turned and saw that Flora, whom, ten minutes before, I had established in the schoolroom with a sheet of white paper, a pencil, and a copy of nice "round o's," now presented herself to view at the open door. She expressed in her little way an extraordinary detachment from disagreeable duties, looking to me, however, with a great childish light that seemed to offer it as a mere result of the affection she had conceived for my person, which had rendered necessary that she should follow me. I needed nothing more than this to feel the full force of Mrs. Grose's comparison, and, catching my pupil in my arms, covered her with kisses in which there was a sob of atonement.

Nonetheless, the rest of the day I watched for further occasion to approach my colleague, especially as, toward evening, I began to fancy she rather sought to avoid me. I overtook her, I remember, on the staircase; we went down together, and at the bottom I detained her, holding her there with a hand on her arm. "I take what you said to me at noon as a declaration that *you've* never known him to be bad."

She threw back her head; she had clearly, by this time, and very honestly, adopted an attitude. "Oh, never known him — I don't pretend *that!*"

I was upset again. "Then you *have* known him — ?"

"Yes indeed, miss, thank God!"

On reflection I accepted this. "You mean that a boy who never is — ?"

"Is no boy for *me!*"

I held her tighter. "You like them with the spirit to be naughty?" Then, keeping pace with her answer, "So do I!" I eagerly brought out. "But not to the degree to contaminate — "

"To contaminate?" — my big word left her at a loss. I explained it. "To corrupt."

She stared, taking my meaning in; but it produced in her an odd laugh. "Are you afraid he'll corrupt *you?*" She put the question with such a fine bold humor that, with a laugh, a little silly doubtless, to match her own, I gave way for the time to the apprehension of ridicule.

But the next day, as the hour for my drive approached, I cropped up in another place. "What was the lady who was here before?"

"The last governess? She was also young and pretty — almost as young and almost as pretty, miss, even as you."

"Ah, then, I hope her youth and her beauty helped her!" I recollect throwing off. "He seems to like us young and pretty!"

"Oh, he *did,*" Mrs. Grose assented — "it was the way he liked everyone!" She had no sooner spoken indeed than she caught herself up. "I mean that's *his* way — the master's."

I was struck. "But of whom did you speak first?"

She looked blank, but she colored. "Why, of *him.*"

"Of the master?"

"Of who else?"

There was so obviously no one else that the next moment I had lost my impression of her having accidentally said more than she meant — and I merely asked what I wanted to know. "Did *she* see anything in the boy — ?"

"That wasn't right? She never told me."

I had a scruple, but I overcame it. "Was she careful — particular?"

Mrs. Grose appeared to try to be conscientious. "About some things — yes."

“But not about all?”

Again she considered. “Well, miss — she’s gone. I won’t tell tales.”

“I quite understand your feeling,” I hastened to reply; but I thought it, after an instant, not opposed to this concession to pursue: “Did she die here?”

“No — she went off.”

I don’t know what there was in this brevity of Mrs. Grose’s that struck me as ambiguous. “Went off to die?” Mrs. Grose looked straight out of the window, but I felt that, hypothetically, I had a right to know what young persons engaged for Bly were expected to do. “She was taken ill, you mean, and went home?”

“She was not taken ill, so far as appeared, in this house. She left it, at the end of the year, to go home, as she said, for a short holiday, to which the time she had put in had certainly given her a right. We had then a young woman a nursemaid who had stayed on and who was a good girl and clever; and *she* took the children altogether for the interval. But our young lady never came back, and at the very moment I was expecting her I heard from the master that she was dead.”

I turned this over. “But of what?”

“He never told me! But please, miss,” said Mrs. Grose, “I must get to my work.”

36.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 3

Henry James

Her thus turning her back on me was fortunately not, for my just preoccupations, a snub that could check the growth of our mutual esteem. We met, after I had brought home little Miles, more intimately than ever on the ground of my stupefaction, my general emotion: so monstrous was I then ready to pronounce it that such a child as had now been revealed to me should be under an interdict. I was a little late on the scene, and I felt, as he stood wistfully looking out for me before the door of the inn at which the coach had put him down, that I had seen him, on the instant, without and within, in the great glow of freshness, the same positive fragrance of purity, in which I had, from the first moment, seen his little sister. He was incredibly beautiful, and Mrs. Grose had put her finger on it: everything but a sort of passion of tenderness for him was swept away by his presence. What I then and there took him to my heart for was something divine that I have never found to the same degree in any child — his indescribable little air of knowing nothing in the world but love. It would have been impossible to carry a bad name with a greater sweetness of innocence, and by the time I had got back to Bly with him I remained merely bewildered — so far, that is, as I was not outraged — by the sense of the horrible letter locked up in my room, in a drawer. As soon as I could compass a private word with Mrs. Grose I declared to her that it was grotesque.

She promptly understood me. “You mean the cruel charge — ?”

“It doesn’t live an instant. My dear woman, *look* at him!”

She smiled at my pretention to have discovered his charm. “I assure you, miss, I do nothing else! What will you say, then?” she immediately added.

“In answer to the letter?” I had made up my mind. “Nothing.”

“And to his uncle?”

I was incisive. “Nothing.”

“And to the boy himself?”

I was wonderful. “Nothing.”

She gave with her apron a great wipe to her mouth. “Then I’ll stand by you. We’ll see it out.”

“We’ll see it out!” I ardently echoed, giving her my hand to make It a vow.

She held me there a moment, then whisked up her apron again with her detached hand. “Would you mind, miss, if I used the freedom — ”

“To kiss me? No!” I took the good creature in my arms and, after we had embraced like sisters, felt still more fortified and indignant.

This, at all events, was for the time: a time so full that, as I recall the way it went, it reminds me of all the art I now need to make it a little distinct. What I look back at with amazement is the situation I accepted. I had undertaken, with my companion, to see it out, and I was under a charm, apparently, that could smooth away the extent and the far and difficult connections of such an effort. I was lifted aloft on a great wave of infatuation and pity. I found it simple, in my ignorance, my confusion, and perhaps my conceit, to assume that I could deal with a boy whose education for the world was all on the point of beginning. I am unable even to remember at this day what proposal I framed for the end of his

holidays and the resumption of his studies. Lessons with me, indeed, that charming summer, we all had a theory that he was to have; but I now feel that, for weeks, the lessons must have been rather my own. I learned something — at first, certainly — that had not been one of the teachings of my small, smothered life; learned to be amused, and even amusing, and not to think for the morrow. It was the first time, in a manner, that I had known space and air and freedom, all the music of summer and all the mystery of nature. And then there was consideration — and consideration was sweet. Oh, it was a trap — not designed, but deep — to my imagination, to my delicacy, perhaps to my vanity; to whatever, in me, was most excitable. The best way to picture it all is to say that I was off my guard. They gave me so little trouble — they were of a gentleness so extraordinary. I used to speculate — but even this with a dim disconnectedness — as to how the rough future (for all futures are rough!) would handle them and might bruise them. They had the bloom of health and happiness; and yet, as if I had been in charge of a pair of little grandees, of princes of the blood, for whom everything, to be right, would have to be enclosed and protected, the only form that, in my fancy, the afteryears could take for them was that of a romantic, a really royal extension of the garden and the park. It may be, of course, above all, that what suddenly broke into this gives the previous time a charm of stillness — that hush in which something gathers or crouches. The change was actually like the spring of a beast.

In the first weeks the days were long; they often, at their finest, gave me what I used to call my own hour, the hour when, for my pupils, teatime and bedtime having come and gone, I had, before my final retirement, a small interval alone. Much as I liked my companions, this hour was the thing in the day I liked most; and I liked it best of all when, as the light faded — or rather, I should say, the day lingered and the last calls of the last birds sounded, in a flushed sky, from the old trees — I could take a turn into the grounds and enjoy, almost with a sense of property that amused and flattered me, the beauty and dignity of the place. It was a pleasure at these moments to feel myself tranquil and justified; doubtless, perhaps, also to reflect that by my discretion, my quiet good sense and general high propriety, I was giving pleasure — if he ever thought of it! — to the person to whose pressure I had responded. What I was doing was what he had earnestly hoped and directly asked of me, and that I *could,* after all, do it proved even a greater joy than I had expected. I daresay I fancied myself, in short, a remarkable young woman and took comfort in the faith that this would more publicly appear. Well, I needed to be remarkable to offer a front to the remarkable things that presently gave their first sign.

It was plump, one afternoon, in the middle of my very hour: the children were tucked away, and I had come out for my stroll. One of the thoughts that, as I don't in the least shrink now from noting, used to be with me in these wanderings was that it would be as charming as a charming story suddenly to meet someone. Someone would appear there at the turn of a path and would stand before me and smile and approve. I didn't ask more than that — I only asked that he should *know* and the only way to be sure he knew would be to see it, and the kind light of it, in his handsome face. That was exactly present to me — by which I mean the face was — when, on the first of these occasions, at the end of a long June day, I stopped short on emerging from one of the plantations and coming into view of the house. What arrested me on the spot — and with a shock much greater than any vision had allowed for — was the sense that my imagination had, in a flash, turned real. He did stand there! — but high up, beyond the lawn and at the very top of the tower to which, on that first morning, little Flora had conducted me. This tower was one of a pair — square, incongruous, crenelated[1] structures — that were distinguished, for some reason, though I could see little difference, as the new and the old. They flanked opposite ends of the house and were probably architectural absurdities, redeemed in a measure indeed by not being wholly disengaged nor of a height too pretentious, dating, in their gingerbread antiquity, from a romantic revival[2] that was

1. Having battlements or open spaces surmounting a wall and used for defense.
2. Revival of interest in "gothic" architecture, such as the structure at Twickenham, "Strawberry Hill," built by Horace Walpole, author of an early gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764).

already a respectable past. I admired them, had fancies about them, for we could all profit in a degree, especially when they loomed through the dusk, by the grandeur of their actual battlements; yet it was not at such an elevation that the figure I had so often invoked seemed most in place.

It produced in me, this figure, in the clear twilight, I remember, two distinct gasps of emotion, which were, sharply, the shock of my first and that of my second surprise. My second was a violent perception of the mistake of my first: the man who met my eyes was not the person I had precipitately supposed. There came to me thus a bewilderment of vision of which, after these years, there is no living view that I can hope to give. An unknown man in a lonely place is a permitted object of fear to a young woman privately bred; and the figure that faced me was — a few more seconds assured me — as little anyone else I knew as it was the image that had been in my mind. I had not seen it in Harley Street — I had not seen it anywhere. The place, moreover, in the strangest way in the world, had, on the instant, and by the very fact of its appearance, become a solitude. To me at least, making my statement here with a deliberation with which I have never made it, the whole feeling of the moment returns. It was as if, while I took in — what I did take in — all the rest of the scene had been stricken with death. I can hear again, as I write, the intense hush in which the sounds of evening dropped. The rooks stopped cawing in the golden sky, and the friendly hour lost, for the minute, all its voice. But there was no other change in nature, unless indeed it were a change that I saw with a stranger sharpness. The gold was still in the sky, the clearness in the air, and the man who looked at me over the battlements was as definite as a picture in a frame. That's how I thought, with extraordinary quickness, of each person that he might have been and that he was not. We were confronted across our distance quite long enough for me to ask myself with intensity who then he was and to feel, as an effect of my inability to say, a wonder that in a few instants more became intense.

The great question, or one of these, is, afterward, I know, with regard to certain matters, the question of how long they have lasted. Well, this matter of mine, think what you will of it, lasted while I caught at a dozen possibilities, none of which made a difference for the better, that I could see, in there having been in the house — and for how long, above all? — a person of whom I was in ignorance. It lasted while I just bridled a little with the sense that my office demanded that there should be no such ignorance and no such person. It lasted while this visitant, at all events — and there was a touch of the strange freedom, as I remember, in the sign of familiarity of his wearing no hat — seemed to fix me, from his position, with just the question, just the scrutiny through the fading light, that his own presence provoked. We were too far apart to call to each other, but there was a moment at which, at shorter range, some challenge between us, breaking the hush, would have been the right result of our straight mutual stare. He was in one of the angles, the one away from the house, very erect, as it struck me, and with both hands on the ledge. So I saw him as I see the letters I form on this page; then, exactly, after a minute, as if to add to the spectacle, he slowly changed his place — passed, looking at me hard all the while, to the opposite corner of the platform. Yes, I had the sharpest sense that during this transit he never took his eyes from me, and I can see at this moment the way his hand, as he went, passed from one of the crenelations to the next. He stopped at the other corner, but less long, and even as he turned away still markedly fixed me. He turned away; that was all I knew.

37.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 4

Henry James

It was not that I didn't wait, on this occasion, for more, for I was rooted as deeply as I was shaken. Was there a "secret" at Bly — a mystery of Udolpho or an insane, an unmentionable relative kept in unsuspected confinement?[1] I can't say how long I turned it over, or how long, in a confusion of curiosity and dread, I remained where I had had my collision; I only recall that when I re-entered the house darkness had quite closed in. Agitation, in the interval, certainly had held me and driven me, for I must, in circling about the place, have walked three miles; but I was to be, later on, so much more overwhelmed that this mere dawn of alarm was a comparatively human chill. The most singular part of it, in fact — singular as the rest had been — was the part I became, in the hall, aware of in meeting Mrs. Grose. This picture comes back to me in the general train — the impression, as I received it on my return, of the wide white panelled space, bright in the lamplight and with its portraits and red carpet, and of the good surprised look of my friend, which immediately told me she had missed me. It came to me straightway, under her contact, that, with plain heartiness, mere relieved anxiety at my appearance, she knew nothing whatever that could bear upon the incident I had there ready for her. I had not suspected in advance that her comfortable face would pull me up, and I somehow measured the importance of what I had seen by my thus finding myself hesitate to mention it. Scarce anything in the whole history seems to me so odd as this fact that my real beginning of fear was one, as I may say, with the instinct of sparing my companion. On the spot, accordingly, in the pleasant hall and with her eyes on me, I, for a reason that I couldn't then have phrased, achieved an inward resolution — offered a vague pretext for my lateness and, with the plea of the beauty of the night and of the heavy dew and wet feet, went as soon as possible to my room.

Here it was another affair; here, for many days after, it was a queer affair enough. There were hours, from day to day — or at least there were moments, snatched even from clear duties — when I had to shut myself up to think. It was not so much yet that I was more nervous than I could bear to be as that I was remarkably afraid of becoming so; for the truth I had now to turn over was, simply and clearly, the truth that I could arrive at no account whatever of the visitor with whom I had been so inexplicably and yet, as it seemed to me, so intimately concerned. It took little time to see that I could sound without forms of inquiry and without exciting remark any domestic complication. The shock I had suffered must have sharpened all my senses; I felt sure, at the end of three days and as the result of mere closer attention, that I had not been practiced upon by the servants nor made the object of any "game." Of whatever it was that I knew, nothing was known around me. There was but one sane inference: someone had taken a liberty rather gross. That was what, repeatedly, I dipped into my room and locked the door to say to myself. We had been, collectively, subject to an intrusion; some unscrupulous traveler, curious in old houses, had made his way in unobserved, enjoyed the prospect from the best point of view, and then stolen out as he came. If he had given me such a bold hard stare, that was but a part of his indiscretion. The good thing, after all, was that we should surely see no more of him.

1. The allusions here are to Gothic elements in *The Mystery of Udolpho* (1794), by Ann Radcliffe, and to Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847).

This was not so good a thing, I admit, as not to leave me to judge that what, essentially, made nothing else much signify was simply my charming work. My charming work was just my life with Miles and Flora, and through nothing could I so like it as through feeling that I could throw myself into it in trouble. The attraction of my small charges was a constant joy, leading me to wonder afresh at the vanity of my original fears, the distaste I had begun by entertaining for the probable gray prose of my office. There was to be no gray prose, it appeared, and no long grind; so how could work not be charming that presented itself as daily beauty? It was all the romance of the nursery and the poetry of the school room. I don't mean by this, of course, that we studied only fiction and verse; I mean I can express no otherwise the sort of interest my companions inspired. How can I describe that except by saying that instead of growing used to them — and it's a marvel for a governess: I call the sisterhood to witness! — I made constant fresh discoveries. There was one direction, assuredly, in which these discoveries stopped: deep obscurity continued to cover the region of the boy's conduct at school. It had been promptly given me, I have noted, to face that mystery without a pang. Perhaps even it would be nearer the truth to say that — without a word — he himself had cleared it up. He had made the whole charge absurd. My conclusion bloomed there with the real rose flush of his innocence: he was only too fine and fair for the little horrid, unclean school world, and he had paid a price for it. I reflected acutely that the sense of such differences, such superiorities of quality, always, on the part of the majority — which could include even stupid, sordid headmasters — turns infallibly to the vindictive.

Both the children had a gentleness (it was their only fault, and it never made Miles a muff[2]) that kept them — how shall I express it? almost impersonal and certainly quite unpunishable. They were like the cherubs of the anecdote, who had — morally, at any rate — nothing to whack![3] I remember feeling with Miles in especial as if he had had, as it were, no history. We expect of a small child a scant one, but there was in this beautiful little boy something extraordinarily sensitive, yet extraordinarily happy, that, more than in any creature of his age I have seen, struck me as beginning anew each day. He had never for a second suffered. I took this as a direct disproof of his having really been chastised. If he had been wicked he would have "caught" it, and I should have caught it by the rebound — I should have found the trace. I found nothing at all, and he was therefore an angel. He never spoke of his school, never mentioned a comrade or a master; and I, for my part, was quite too much disgusted to allude to them. Of course I was under the spell, and the wonderful part is that, even at the time, I perfectly knew I was. But I gave myself up to it; it was an antidote to any pain, and I had more pains than one. I was in receipt in these days of disturbing letters from home, where things were not going well. But with my children, what things in the world mattered? That was the question I used to put to my scrappy retirements. I was dazzled by their loveliness.

There was a Sunday — to get on — when it rained with such force and for so many hours that there could be no procession to church; in consequence of which, as the day declined, I had arranged with Mrs. Grose that, should the evening show improvement, we would attend together the late service. The rain happily stopped, and I prepared for our walk, which, through the park and by the good road to the village, would be a matter of twenty minutes. Coming downstairs to meet my colleague in the hall, I remembered a pair of gloves that had required three stitches and that had received them — with a publicity perhaps not edifying — while I sat with the children at their tea, served on Sundays, by exception, in that cold, clean temple of mahogany and brass, the "grown-up" dining room. The gloves had been dropped there, and I turned in to recover them. The day was gray enough, but the afternoon light still lingered, and

2. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives this colloquial definition of "muff": "a...feeble, or incompetent person."

3. The anecdote in question is recorded by Charles Lamb (1775-1834) in his essay, "Christ's Hospital Five-and-Thirty Years Ago." Lamb recalls the reaction of Samuel Taylor Coleridge on learning that their former headmaster, James Boyer, a great advocate of corporal punishment, was dying: "Poor J.B.!—may all his faults be forgiven. And may he be wafted to bliss by little cherub boys, all head and wings, with no bottoms to reproach his sublunary infirmities."

it enabled me, on crossing the threshold, not only to recognize, on a chair near the wide window, then closed, the articles I wanted, but to become aware of a person on the other side of the window and looking straight in. One step into the room had sufficed; my vision was instantaneous; it was all there. The person looking straight in was the person who had already appeared to me. He appeared thus again with I won't say greater distinctness, for that was impossible, but with a nearness that represented a forward stride in our intercourse and made me, as I met him, catch my breath and turn cold. He was the same — he was the same, and seen, this time, as he had been seen before, from the waist up, the window, though the dining room was on the ground floor, not going down to the terrace on which he stood. His face was close to the glass, yet the effect of this better view was, strangely, only to show me how intense the former had been. He remained but a few seconds — long enough to convince me he also saw and recognized; but it was as if I had been looking at him for years and had known him always. Something, however, happened this tune that had not happened before; his stare into my face, through the glass and across the room, was as deep and hard as then, but it quitted me for a moment during which I could still watch it, see it fix successively several other things. On the spot there came to me the added shock of a certitude that it was not for me he had come there. He had come for someone else.

The flash of this knowledge — for it was knowledge in the midst of dread — produced in me the most extraordinary effect, started, as I stood there, a sudden vibration of duty and courage. I say courage because I was beyond all doubt already far gone. I bounded straight out of the door again, reached that of the house, got, in an instant, upon the drive, and, passing along the terrace as fast as I could rush, turned a corner and came full in sight. But it was in sight of nothing now — my visitor had vanished. I stopped, I almost dropped, with the real relief of this; but I took in the whole scene — I gave him time to reappear. I call it time, but how long was it? I can't speak to the purpose today of the duration of these things. That kind of measure must have left me: they couldn't have lasted as they actually appeared to me to last. The terrace and the whole place, the lawn and the garden beyond it, all I could see of the park, were empty with a great emptiness. There were shrubberies and big trees, but I remember the clear assurance I felt that none of them concealed him. He was there or was not there: not there if I didn't see him. I got hold of this; then, instinctively, instead of returning as I had come, went to the window. It was confusedly present to me that I ought to place myself where he had stood. I did so; I applied my face to the pane and looked, as he had looked, into the room. As if, at this moment, to show me exactly what his range had been, Mrs. Grose, as I had done for himself just before, came in from the hall. With this I had the full image of a repetition of what had already occurred. She saw me as I had seen my own visitant; she pulled up short as I had done; I gave her something of the shock that I had received. She turned white, and this made me ask myself if I had blanched as much. She stared, in short, and retreated on just *my* lines, and I knew she had then passed out and come round to me and that I should presently meet her. I remained where I was, and while I waited I thought of more things than one. But there's only one I take space to mention. I wondered why *she* should be scared.

38.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 5

Henry James

Oh, she let me know as soon as, round the corner of the house, she loomed again into view. "What in the name of goodness is the matter — ?" She was now flushed and out of breath.

I said nothing till she came quite near. "With me?" I must have made a wonderful face. "Do I show it?"

"You're as white as a sheet. You look awful."

I considered; I could meet on this, without scruple, any innocence. My need to respect the bloom of Mrs. Grose's had dropped, without a rustle, from my shoulders, and if I wavered for the instant it was not with what I kept back. I put out my hand to her and she took it; I held her hard a little, liking to feel her close to me. There was a kind of support in the shy heave of her surprise. "You came for me for church, of course, but I can't go."

"Has anything happened?"

"Yes. You must know now. Did I look very queer?"

"Through this window? Dreadful!"

"Well," I said, "I've been frightened." Mrs. Grose's eyes expressed plainly that *she* had no wish to be, yet also that she knew too well her place not to be ready to share with me any marked inconvenience. Oh, it was quite settled that she *must* share! "Just what you saw from the dining room a minute ago was the effect of that. What *I* saw — just before — was much worse."

Her hand tightened. "What was it?"

"An extraordinary man. Looking in."

"What extraordinary man?"

"I haven't the least idea."

Mrs. Grose gazed round us in vain. 'Then where is he gone?"

"I know still less."

"Have you seen him before?"

"Yes — once. On the old tower."

She could only look at me harder. "Do you mean he's a stranger?"

"Oh, very much!"

"Yet you didn't tell me?"

"No — for reasons. But now that you've guessed — "

Mrs. Grose's round eyes encountered this charge. "Ah, I haven't guessed!" she said very simply. "How can I if *you* don't imagine?"

"I don't in the very least."

"You've seen him nowhere but on the tower?"

"And on this spot just now."

Mrs. Grose looked round again. "What was he doing on the tower?"

"Only standing there and looking down at me."

She thought a minute. "Was he a gentleman?"

I found I had no need to think. “No.” She gazed in deeper wonder. “No.”

“Then nobody about the place? Nobody from the village?”

“Nobody — nobody. I didn’t tell you, but I made sure.”

She breathed a vague relief: this was, oddly, so much to the good. It only went indeed a little way, “But if he isn’t a gentleman — ”

“What *is* he? He’s a horror.”

“A horror?”

“He’s — God help me if I know *what* he is!”

Mrs. Grose looked round once more; she fixed her eyes on the duskier distance, then, pulling herself together, turned to me with abrupt inconsequence. “It’s time we should be at church.”

“Oh, I’m not fit for church!”

“Won’t it do you good?”

“It won’t do *them* — !” I nodded at the house.

“The children?”

“I can’t leave them now.”

“You’re afraid — ?”

I spoke boldly. “I’m afraid of *him.*”

Mrs. Grose’s large face showed me, at this, for the first time, the faraway faint glimmer of a consciousness more acute: I somehow made out in it the delayed dawn of an idea I myself had not given her and that was as yet quite obscure to me, It comes back to me that I thought instantly of this as something I could get from her; and I felt it to be connected with the desire she presently showed to know more. “When was it — on the tower?”

“About the middle of the month. At this same hour.”

“Almost at dark,” said Mrs. Grose.

“Oh, no, not nearly. I saw him as I see you.”

“Then how did he get in?”

“And how did he get out?” I laughed. “I had no opportunity to ask him! This evening, you see,” I pursued, “he has not been able to get in.”

“He only peeps?”

“I hope it will be confined to that!” She had now let go my hand; she turned away a little. I waited an instant; then I brought out: “Go to church. Goodbye. I must watch.”

Slowly she faced me again. “Do you fear for them?”

We met in another long look, “Don’t *you?*” Instead of answering she came nearer to the window and, for a minute, applied her face to the glass. “You see how he could see,” I meanwhile went on.

She didn’t move. “How long was he here?”

“Till I came out. I came to meet him.”

Mrs. Grose at last turned round, and there was still more in her face. “*I* couldn’t have come out.”

“Neither could l!” I laughed again. “But I did come. I have my duty.”

“So have I mine,” she replied; after which she added “What is he like?”

“I’ve been dying to tell you. But he’s like nobody.”

“Nobody?” she echoed.

“He has no hat.” Then seeing in her face that she already, in this, with a deeper dismay, found a touch of picture, I quickly added stroke to stroke. “He has red hair, very red, close-curling, and a pale face, long in shape, with straight, good features and little, rather queer whiskers that are as red as his hair. His eyebrows are, somehow, darker; they look particularly arched and as if they might move a good deal. His eyes are sharp, strange — awfully; but I only know clearly that they’re rather small and very fixed.

His mouth's wide, and his lips are thin, and except for his little whiskers he's quite clean-shaven. He gives me a sort of sense of looking like an actor."

"An actor!" It was impossible to resemble one less, at least, than Mrs. Grose at that moment.

"I've never seen one, but so I suppose them. He's tall, active, erect," I continued, "but never — no, never! — a gentleman."

My companion's face had blanched as I went on; her round eyes started and her mild mouth gaped. "A gentleman?" she gasped, confounded, stupefied: "a gentleman *he?*"

"You know him then?"

She visibly tried to hold herself. "But he *is* handsome?"

I saw the way to help her. "Remarkably!"

"And dressed — ?"

"In somebody's clothes. They're smart, but they're not his own."

She broke into a breathless affirmative groan: "They're the master's!"

I caught it up. "You *do* know him?"

She faltered but a second. "Quint!" she cried.

"Quint?"

"Peter Quint — his own man, his valet, when he was here!"

"When the master was?"

Gaping still, but meeting me, she pieced it all together. "He never wore his hat, but he did wear — well, there were waistcoats missed. They were both here — last year. Then the master went, and Quint was alone."

I followed, but halting a little. "Alone?"

"Alone with *us.*" Then, as from a deeper depth, "In charge," she added.

"And what became of him?"

She hung fire so long that I was still more mystified. "He went, too," she brought out at last.

"Went where?"

Her expression, at this, became extraordinary. "God knows where! He died."

"Died?" I almost shrieked.

She seemed fairly to square herself, plant herself more firmly to utter the wonder of it. "Yes. Mr. Quint is dead."

39.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 6

Henry James

It took of course more than that particular passage to place us together in presence of what we had now to live with as we could — my dreadful liability to impressions of the order so vividly exemplified, and my companion's knowledge, henceforth — a knowledge half consternation and half compassion — of that liability. There had been, this evening, after the revelation that left me, for an hour, so prostrate — there had been, for either of us, no attendance on any service but a little service of tears and vows, of prayers and promises, a climax to the series of mutual challenges and pledges that had straightway ensued on our retreating together to me schoolroom and shutting ourselves up there to have everything out. The result of our having everything out was simply to reduce our situation to the last rigor of its elements. She herself had seen nothing, not the shadow of a shadow, and nobody in the house but the governess was in the governess's plight; yet she accepted without directly impugning my sanity the truth as I gave it to her, and ended by showing me, on this ground, an awestricken tenderness, an expression of the sense of my more than questionable privilege, of which the very breath has remained with me as that of the sweetest of human charities.

What was settled between us, accordingly, that night, was that we thought we might bear things together; and I was not even sure that, in spite of her exemption, it was she who had the best of the burden. I knew at this hour, I think, as well as I knew later, what I was capable of meeting to shelter my pupils; but it took me some time to be wholly sure of what my honest ally was prepared for to keep terms with so compromising a contract, I was queer company enough — quite as queer as the company I received; but as I trace over what we went through I see how much common ground we must have found in the one idea that, by good fortune, *could* steady us. It was the idea, the second movement, that led me straight out, as I may say, of the inner chamber of my dread. I could take the air in the court, at least, and there Mrs. Grose could join me. Perfectly can I recall now the particular way strength came to me before we separated for the night. We had gone over and over every feature of what I had seen.

"He was looking for someone else, you say — someone who was not you?"

"He was looking for little Miles." A portentous clearness now possessed me. "*That's* whom he was looking for."

"But how do you know?"

"I know, I know, I know!" My exaltation grew. "And *you* know, my dear!"

She didn't deny this, but I required, I felt, not even so much telling as that. She resumed in a moment, at any rate: "What if *he* should see him?"

"Little Miles? That's what he wants!"

She looked immensely scared again. "The child?"

"Heaven forbid! The man. He wants to appear to *them*." That he might was an awful conception, and yet, somehow, I could keep it at bay; which, moreover, as we lingered there, was what I succeeded in practically proving, I had an absolute certainty that I should see again what I had already seen, but something within me said that by offering myself bravely as the sole subject of such experience, by accepting, by inviting, by surmounting it all, I should serve as an expiatory victim and guard the

tranquility of my companions. The children, in especial I should thus fence about and absolutely save. I recall one of the last things I said that night to Mrs. Grose.

"It does strike me that my pupils have never mentioned — "

She looked at me hard as I musingly pulled up. "His having been here and the time they were with him?"

"The time they were with him, and his name, his presence, his history, in any way."

"Oh, the little lady doesn't remember. She never heard or knew."

"The circumstances of his death?" I thought with some intensity. "Perhaps not. But Miles would remember — Miles would know."

"Ah, don't try him!" broke from Mrs. Grose

I returned her the look she had given me. "Don't be afraid." I continued to think. "It *is* rather odd."

"That he has never spoken of him?"

"Never by the least allusion. And you tell me they were 'great friends'?"

"Oh, it wasn't *him!*" Mrs. Grose with emphasis declared. "It was Quint's own fancy. To play with him, I mean — to spoil him," She paused a moment; then she added: "Quint was much too free."

This gave me, straight from my vision of his face — *such* a face! — a sudden sickness of disgust. "Too free with *my* boy?"

"Too free with everyone!"

I forbore, for the moment, to analyze this description further than by the reflection that a part of it applied to several of the members of the household, of the half-dozen maids and men who were still of our small colony. But there was everything, for our apprehension, in the lucky fact that no discomfortable legend, no perturbation of scullions, had ever, within anyone's memory attached to the kind old place. It had neither bad name nor ill fame, and Mrs. Grose, most apparently, only desired to cling to me and to quake in silence. I even put her, the very last thing of all, to the test. It was when, at midnight, she had her hand on the schoolroom door to take leave. "I have it from you then — for it's of great importance — that he was definitely and admittedly bad?"

"Oh, not admittedly. *I* knew it — but the master didn't."

"And you never told him?"

"Well, he didn't like tale-bearing — he hated complaints. He was terribly short with anything of that kind, and if people were all right to him — "

"He wouldn't be bothered with more?" This squared well enough with my impression of him: he was not a trouble-loving gentleman, nor so very particular perhaps about some of the company *he* kept. All the same, I pressed my interlocutress, "I promise you I would have told!"

She felt my discrimination. "I daresay I was wrong. But, really, I was afraid."

"Afraid of what?"

"Of things that man could do. Quint was so clever — he was so deep."

I took this in still more than, probably, I showed. "You weren't afraid of anything else? Not of his effect — ?"

"His effect?" she repeated with a face of anguish and waiting while I faltered.

"On innocent little precious lives. They were in your charge."

"No, they were not in mine!" she roundly and distressfully returned. "The master believed in him and placed him here because he was supposed not to be well and the country air so good for him. So he had everything to say. Yes" — she let me have it — "even about *them.*"

"Them — that creature?" I had to smother a kind of howl. "And you could bear it!"

"No. I couldn't — and I can't now!" And the poor woman burst into tears.

A rigid control, from the next day, was, as I have said, to follow them; yet how often and how passionately, for a week, we came back together to the subject! Much as we had discussed it that Sunday

night, I was, in the immediate later hours in especial — for it may be imagined whether I slept — still haunted with the shadow of something she had not told me. I myself had kept back nothing, but there was a word Mrs. Grose had kept back. I was sure, moreover, by morning, that this was not from a failure of frankness, but because on every side there were fears. It seems to me indeed, in retrospect, that by the time the morrow's sun was high I had restlessly read into the fact before us almost all the meaning they were to receive from subsequent and more cruel occurrences. What they gave me above all was just the sinister figure of the living man — the dead one would keep awhile! — and of the months he had continuously passed at Bly, which, added up, made a formidable stretch. The limit of this evil time had arrived only when, on the dawn of a winter's morning, Peter Quint was found, by a laborer going to early work, stone dead on the road from the village: a catastrophe explained — superficially at least — by a visible wound to his head; such a wound as might have been produced — and as, on the final evidence, *had* been — by a fatal slip, in the dark and after leaving the public house, on the steepish icy slope, a wrong path altogether, at the bottom of which he lay. The icy slope, the turn mistaken at night and in liquor, accounted for much — practically, in the end and after the inquest and boundless chatter, for everything; but there had been matters in his life — strange passages and perils, secret disorders, vices more than suspected — that would have accounted for a good deal more.

I scarce know how to put my story into words that shall be a credible picture of my state of mind; but I was in these days literally able to find a joy in the extraordinary flight of heroism the occasion demanded of me, I now saw that I had been asked for a service admirable and difficult; and there would be a greatness in letting it be seen — oh, in the right quarter! — that I could succeed where many another girl might have failed. It was an immense help to me — I confess I rather applaud myself as I look back! — that I saw my service so strongly and so simply. I was there to protect and defend the little creatures in the world the most bereaved and the most lovable, the appeal of whose helplessness had suddenly become only too explicit, a deep, constant ache of one's own committed heart. We were cut off, really, together; we were united in our danger. They had nothing but me, and I — well, I had *them*. It was in short a magnificent chance. This chance presented itself to me in an image richly material. I was a screen — I was to stand before them. The more I saw, the less they would. I began to watch them in a stifled suspense, a disguised excitement that might well, had it continued too long, have turned to something like madness. What saved me, as I now see, was that it turned to something else altogether. It didn't last as suspense — it was superseded by horrible proofs. Proofs, I say, yes — from the moment I really took hold.

This moment dated from an afternoon hour that I happened to spend in the grounds with the younger of my pupils alone. We had left Miles indoors, on the red cushion of a deep window seat; he had wished to finish a book, and I had been glad to encourage a purpose so laudable in a young man whose only defect was an occasional excess of the restless. His sister, on the contrary, had been alert to come out, and I strolled with her half an hour, seeking the shade, for the sun was still high and the day exceptionally warm. I was aware afresh, with her, as we went, of how, like her brother, she contrived — it was the charming thing in both children — to let me alone without appearing to drop me and to accompany me without appearing to surround. They were never importunate and yet never listless. My attention to them all really went to seeing them amuse themselves immensely without me: this was a spectacle they seemed actively to prepare and that engaged me as an active admirer. I walked in a world of their invention — they had no occasion whatever to draw upon mine; so that my time was taken only with being, for them, some remarkable person or thing that the game of the moment required and that was merely, thanks to my superior, my exalted stamp, a happy and highly distinguished sinecure. I forget what I was on the present occasion; I only remember that I was something very important and very quiet

and that Flora was playing very hard. We were on the edge of the lake, and, as we had lately begun geography, the lake was the Sea of Azof[1].

Suddenly, in these circumstances, I became aware that, on the other side of the Sea of Azof, we had an interested spectator. The way this knowledge gathered in me was the strangest thing in the world — the strangest, that is, except the very much stranger in which it quickly merged itself. I had sat down with a piece of work — for I was something or other that could sit — on the old stone bench which overlooked the pond; and in this position I began to take in with certitude, and yet without direct vision, the presence, at a distance, of a third person. The old trees, the thick shrubbery, made a great and pleasant shade, but it was all suffused with the brightness of the hot, still hour. There was no ambiguity in anything; none whatever, at least, in the conviction I from one moment to another found myself forming as to what I should see straight before me and across the lake as a consequence of raising my eyes. They were attached at this juncture to the stitching in which I was engaged, and I can feel once more the spasm of my effort not to move them till I should so have steadied myself as to be able to make up my mind what to do. There was an alien object in view — a figure whose right of presence I instantly, passionately questioned. I recollect counting over perfectly the possibilities, reminding myself that nothing was more natural, for instance, than the appearance of one of the men about the place, or even of a messenger, a postman, or a tradesman's boy, from the village. That reminder had as little effect on my practical certitude as I was conscious — still even without looking — of its having upon the character and attitude of our visitor. Nothing was more natural than that these things should be the other things that they absolutely were not.

Of the positive identity of the apparition I would assure myself as soon as the small clock of my courage should have ticked out the right second; meanwhile, with an effort that was already sharp enough, I transferred my eyes straight to little Flora, who, at the moment, was about ten yards away. My heart had stood still for an instant with the wonder and terror of the question whether she too would see; and I held my breath while I waited for what a cry from her, what some sudden innocent sign either of interest or of alarm, would tell me. I waited, but nothing came; then, in the first place — and there is something more dire in this, I feel, than in anything I have to relate — I was determined by a sense that, within a minute, all sounds from her had previously dropped; and, in the second, by the circumstance that, also within the minute, she had, in her play, turned her back to the water. This was her attitude when I at last looked at her — looked with the confirmed conviction that we were still, together, under direct personal notice. She had picked up a small flat piece of wood, which happened to have in it a little hole that had evidently suggested to her the idea of sticking in another fragment that might figure as a mast and make the thing a boat This second morsel, as I watched her, she was very markedly and intently attempting to tighten in its place. My apprehension of what she was doing sustained me so that after some seconds I felt I was ready for more. Then I again shifted my eyes — I faced what I had to face.

1. A shallow part of the Black Sea.

40.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 7

Henry James

I got hold of Mrs. Grose as soon after this as I could; and I can give no intelligible account of how I fought out the interval. Yet I still hear myself cry as I fairly threw myself into her arms: “They *know* — it’s too monstrous: they know, they know!”

“And what on earth — ?” I felt her incredulity as she held me.

“Why, all that *we* know — and heaven knows what else besides!” Then, as she released me, I made it out to her, made it out perhaps only now with full coherency even to myself. “Two hours ago, in the garden” — I could scarce articulate — “Flora *saw!*”

Mrs. Grose took it as she might have taken a blow in the stomach. “She has told you?” she panted.

“Not a word — that’s the horror. She kept it to herself! The child of eight, *that* child!” Unutterable still, for me, was the stupefaction of it.

Mrs. Grose, of course, could only gape the wider. “Then how do you know?”

“I was there — I saw with my eyes: saw that she was perfectly aware.”

“Do you mean aware of *him?*”

“No — of *her.*” I was conscious as I spoke that I looked prodigious things, for I got the slow reflection of them in my companion’s face. “Another person — this time; but a figure of quite as unmistakable horror and evil: a woman in black, pale and dreadful — with such an air also, and such a face! — on the other side of the lake. I was there with the child — quiet for the hour; and in the midst of it she came.”

“Came how — from where?”

“From where they come from! She just appeared and stood there — but not so near.”

“And without coming nearer?”

“Oh, for the effect and the feeling, she might have been as close as you!”

My friend, with an odd impulse, fell back a step. “Was she someone you’ve never seen?”

“Yes. But someone the child has. Someone *you* have. Then, to show how I had thought it all out: “My predecessor — the one who died.”

“Miss Jessel?”

“Miss Jessel. You don’t believe me?” I pressed.

She turned right and left in her distress. “How can you be sure?”

This drew from me, in the state of my nerves, a flash of impatience. “Then ask Flora — *she’s* sure!” But I had no sooner spoken than I caught myself up. “No, for God’s sake, *don’t!* She’ll say she isn’t — she’ll lie!”

Mrs. Grose was not too bewildered instinctively to protest “Ah, how *can* you?”

“Because I’m clear. Flora doesn’t want me to know.”

“It’s only then to spare you.”

“No, no — there are depths, depths! The more I go over it, the more I see in it, and the more I see in it, the more I fear. I don’t know what I *don’t* see — what I *don’t* fear!”

Mrs. Grose tried to keep up with me. “You mean you’re afraid of seeing her again?”

“Oh, no; that’s nothing — now!” Then I explained. “It’s of *not* seeing her.”

But my companion only looked wan. “I don’t understand you.”

“Why, it’s that the child may keep it up — and that the child assuredly *will* — without my knowing it.”

At the image of this possibility Mrs. Grose for a moment collapsed, yet presently to pull herself together again, as if from the positive force of the sense of what, should we yield an inch, there would really be to give way to. “Dear, dear — we must keep our heads! And after all, if she doesn’t mind it — !” She even tried a grim joke. “Perhaps she likes it!”

“Likes *such* things — a scrap of an infant!”

“Isn’t it just a proof of her blessed innocence?” my friend bravely inquired.

She brought me, for the instant, almost round. “Oh, we must clutch at *that* — we must cling to it! If it isn’t a proof of what you say, it’s a proof of — God knows what! For the woman’s a horror of horrors.”

Mrs. Grose, at this, fixed her eyes a minute on the ground; then at last raising them, “Tell me how you know,” she said.

“Then you admit it’s what she was?” I cried.

“Tell me how you know,” my friend simply repeated.

“Know? By seeing her! By the way she looked.”

“At you, do you mean — so wickedly?”

“Dear me, no — I could have borne that. She gave me never a glance. She only fixed the child.”

Mrs. Grose tried to see it. “Fixed her?”

“Ah, with such awful eyes!”

She stared at mine as if they might really have resembled them. “Do you mean of dislike?”

“God help us, no. Of something much worse.”

“Worse than dislike?” — this left her indeed at a loss.

“With a determination — indescribable. With a kind of fury of intention.”

I made her turn pale. “Intention?”

“To get hold of her.” Mrs. Grose — her eyes just lingering on mine — gave a shudder and walked to the window; and while she stood there looking out I completed my statement. “*That’s* what Flora knows.”

After a little she turned round. “The person was in black, you say?”

“In mourning — rather poor, almost shabby. But — yes — with extraordinary beauty.” I now recognized to what I had at last, stroke by stroke, brought the the victim of my confidence, for she quite visibly weighed this. “Oh, handsome — very, very,” I insisted; “wonderfully handsome. But infamous.”

She slowly came back to me. “Miss Jessel — *was* infamous.” She once more took my hand in both her own, holding it as tight as if to fortify me against the increase of alarm I might draw from this disclosure. “They were both infamous,” she finally said.

So, for a little, we faced it once more together; and I found absolutely a degree of help in seeing it now so straight. “I appreciate,” I said, “the great decency of your not having hitherto spoken; but the time has certainly come to give me the whole thing.” She appeared to assent to this, but still only in silence; seeing which I went on: “I must have it now. Of what did she die? Come, there was something between them.”

“There was everything.”

“In spite of the difference — ?”

“Oh, of their rank, their condition” — she brought it woefully out. “*She* was a lady.”

I turned it over; I again saw. “Yes — she was a lady.”

“And he so dreadfully below,” said Mrs. Grose.

I felt that I doubtless needn’t press too hard, in such company, on the place of a servant in the scale; but there was nothing to prevent an acceptance of my companion’s own measure of my predecessor’s

abasement. There was a way to deal with that, and I dealt; the more readily for my full vision — on the evidence — of our employer's late clever, good-looking "own" man; impudent, assured, spoiled, depraved. "The fellow was a hound."

Mrs. Grose considered as if it were perhaps a little a case for a sense of shades. "I've never seen one like him. He did what he wished."

"With *her?*"

"With them all."

It was as if now in my friend's own eyes Miss Jessel had again appeared. I seemed at any rate, for an instant, to see their evocation of her as distinctly as I had seen her by the pond; and I brought out with decision: "It must have been also what *she* wished!"

Mrs. Grose's face signified that it had been indeed, but she said at the same time: "Poor woman — she paid for it!"

"Then you do know what she died of?" I asked.

"No — I know nothing. I wanted not to know; I was glad enough I didn't; and I thanked heaven she was well out of this!"

"Yet you had, then, your idea — "

"Of her real reason for leaving? Oh, yes — as to that. She couldn't have stayed. Fancy it here — for a governess! And afterward I imagined — and I still imagine. And what I imagine is dreadful."

"Not so dreadful as what I do," I replied; on which I must have shown her — as I was indeed but too conscious — a front of miserable defeat. It brought out again all her compassion for me, and at the renewed touch of her kindness my power to resist broke down. I burst, as I had, the other time, made her burst, into tears; she took me to her motherly breast, and my lamentation overflowed. "I don't do it!" I sobbed in despair; "I don't save or shield them! It's far worse than I dreamed — they're lost!"

41.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 8

Henry James

What I had said to Mrs. Grose was true enough: there were in the matter I had put before her depths and possibilities that I lacked resolution to sound; so that when we met once more in the wonder of it we were of a common mind about the duty of resistance to extravagant fancies. We were to keep our heads if we should keep nothing else — difficult indeed as that might be in the face of what, in our prodigious experience, was least to be questioned. Late that night, while the house slept, we had another talk in my room, when she went all the way with me as to its being beyond doubt that I had seen exactly what I had seen. To hold her perfectly in the pinch of that, I found I had only to ask her how, if I had "made it up," I came to be able to give, of each of the persons appearing to me, a picture disclosing, to the last detail, their special marks — a portrait on the exhibition of which she had instantly recognized and named them. She wished of course — small blame to her! — to sink the whole subject; and I was quick to assure her that my own interest in it had now violently taken the form of a search for the way to escape from it. I encountered her on the ground of a probability that with recurrence — for recurrence we took for granted — I should get used to my danger, distinctly professing that my personal exposure had suddenly become the least of my discomforts. It was my new suspicion that was intolerable; and yet even to this complication the later hours of the day had brought a little ease.

On leaving her, after my first outbreak, I had of course returned to my pupils, associating the right remedy for my dismay with that sense of their charm which I had already found to be a thing I could positively cultivate and which had never failed me yet. I had simply, in other words, plunged afresh into Flora's special society and there become aware — it was almost a luxury! — that she could put her little conscious hand straight upon the spot that ached. She had looked at me in sweet speculation and then had accused me to my face of having "cried." I had supposed I had brushed away the ugly signs: but I could literally — for the time, at all events — rejoice, under this fathomless charity, that they had not entirely disappeared. To gaze into the depths of blue of the child's eyes and pronounce their loveliness a trick of premature cunning was to be guilty of a cynicism in preference to which I naturally preferred to abjure my judgment and, so far as might be, my agitation. I couldn't abjure for merely wanting to, but I could repeat to Mrs. Grose as I did there, over and over, in the small hours — that with their voices in the air, their pressure on one's heart, and their fragrant faces against one's cheek, everything fell to the ground but their incapacity and their beauty. It was a pity that, somehow, to settle this once for all, I had equally to re-enumerate the signs of subtlety that, in the afternoon, by the lake, had made a miracle of my show of self-possession. It was a pity to be obliged to reinvestigate the certitude of the moment itself and repeat how it had come to me as a revelation that the inconceivable communion I then surprised was a matter, for either party, of habit. It was a pity that I should have had to quaver out again the reasons for my not having, in my delusion, so much as questioned that the little girl saw our visitant even as I actually saw Mrs. Grose herself, and that she wanted, by just so much as she did thus see, to make me suppose she didn't, and at the same time, without showing anything, arrive at a guess as to whether I myself did! It was a pity that I needed once more to describe the portentous little activity by which she

sought to divert my attention — the perceptible increase of movement, the greater intensity of play, the singing, the gabbling of nonsense, and the invitation to romp.

Yet if I had not indulged, to prove there was nothing in it, in this review, I should have missed the two or three dim elements of comfort that still remained to me. I should not for instance have been able to asseverate to my friend that I was certain — which was so much to the good — that *I* at least had not betrayed myself. I should not have been prompted, by stress of need, by desperation of mind — I scarce know what to call it — to invoke such further aid to intelligence as might spring from pushing my colleague fairly to the wall. She had told me, bit by bit, under pressure, a great deal; but a small shifty spot on the wrong side of it all still sometimes brushed my brow like the wing of a bat; and I remember how on this occasion — for the sleeping house and the concentration alike of our danger and our watch seemed to help — felt the importance of giving the last jerk to the curtain. “I don’t believe anything so horrible,” I recollect saying; “no, let us put it definitely, my dear, that I don’t. But if I did, you know, there’s a thing I should require now, just without sparing you the least bit more — , not a scrap, come! — to get out of you. What was it you had in mind when, in our distress, before Miles came back, over the letter from his school, you said, under my insistence, that you didn’t pretend for him that he had not literally *ever* been ‘bad’? He has *not* literally ‘ever,’ in these weeks that I myself have lived with him and so closely watched him; he has been an imperturbable little prodigy of delightful, lovable goodness. Therefore you might perfectly have made the claim for him if you had not, as it happened, seen an exception to take. What was your exception, and to what passage in your personal observation of him did you refer?”

It was a dreadfully austere inquiry, but levity was not our note, and, at any rate, before the gray dawn admonished us to separate I had got my answer. What my friend had had in mind proved to be immensely to the purpose. It was neither more nor less than the circumstance that for a period of several months Quint and the boy had been perpetually together. It was in fact the very appropriate truth that she had ventured to criticize the propriety, to hint at the incongruity, of so close an alliance, and even to go so far on the subject as a frank overture to Miss Jessel. Miss Jessel had, with a most strange manner, requested her to mind her business, and the good woman had, on this, directly approached little Miles. What she had said to him, since I pressed, was that *she* liked to see young gentlemen not forget their station.

I pressed again, of course, at this. “You reminded him that Quint was only a base menial?”

“As you might say! And it was his answer, for one thing, that was bad.”

“And for another thing?” I waited. “He repeated your words to Quint?”

“No, not that. It’s just what he *wouldn’t!*” she could still impress upon me. “I was sure, at any rate,” she added, “that he didn’t. But he denied certain occasions.”

“What occasions?”

“When they had been about together quite as if Quint were his tutor — and a very grand one — and Miss Jessel only for the little lady. When he had gone off with the fellow, I mean, and spent hours with him.”

“He then prevaricated about it — he said he hadn’t?” Her assent was clear enough to cause me to add in a moment: “I see. He lied.”

“Oh!” Mrs. Grose mumbled. This was a suggestion that it didn’t matter; which indeed she backed up by a further remark. “You see, after all, Miss Jessel didn’t mind. She didn’t forbid him.”

I considered. “Did he put that to you as a justification?”

At this she dropped again. “No, he never spoke of it.”

“Never mentioned her in connection with Quint?”

She saw, visibly flushing, where I was coming out. “Well, he didn’t show anything. He denied,” she repeated — “he denied.”

Lord, how I pressed her now! “So that you could see he knew what was between the two wretches?”

"I don't know — I don't know!" the poor woman groaned.

"You do know, you dear thing," I replied; "only you haven't my dreadful boldness of mind, and you keep back, out of timidity and modesty and delicacy, even the impression that, in the past, when you had, without my aid, to flounder about in silence, most of all made you miserable. But I shall get it out of you yet! There was something in the boy that suggested to you," I continued, "that he covered and concealed their relation."

"Oh, he couldn't prevent — "

"Your learning the truth? I daresay! But, heavens," I fell, with vehemence, athinking, "what it shows that they must, to that extent, have succeeded in making of him!"

"Ah, nothing that's not nice *now!*" Mrs. Grose lugubriously pleaded.

"I don't wonder you looked queer," I persisted, "when I mentioned to you the letter from his school!"

"I doubt if I looked as queer as you!" she retorted with homely force. "And if he was so bad then as that comes to, how is he such an angel now?"

"Yes, indeed — and if he was a fiend at school! How, how, how? Well," I said in my torment, "you must put it to me again, but I shall not be able to tell you for some days. Only, put it to me again!" I cried in a way that made my friend stare. "There are directions in which I must not for the present let myself go." Meanwhile I returned to her first example — the one to which she had just previously referred — of the boy's happy capacity for an occasional slip. "If Quint — on your remonstrance at the time you speak of — was a base menial, one of the things Miles said to you, I find myself guessing, was that you were another." Again her admission was so adequate that I continued: "And you forgave him that?"

"Wouldn't *you?*"

"Oh, yes!" And we exchanged there, in the stillness, a sound of the oddest amusement. Then I went on: "At all events, while he was with the man — "

"Miss Flora was with the woman. It suited them all!" It suited me, too, I felt, only too well; by which I mean that it suited exactly the particularly deadly view I was in the very act of forbidding myself to entertain. But I so far succeeded in checking the expression of this view that I will throw, just here, no further light on it than may be offered by the mention of my final observation to Mrs. Grose. "His having lied and been impudent are, I confess, less engaging specimens than I had hoped to have from you of the outbreak in him of the little natural man. Still," I mused, "They must do, for they make me feel more than ever that I must watch."

It made me blush, the next minute, to see in my friend's face how much more unreservedly she had forgiven him than her anecdote struck me as presenting to my own tenderness an occasion for doing. This came out when, at the schoolroom door, she quitted me. "Surely you don't accuse *him* — "

"Of carrying on an intercourse that he conceals from me? Ah, remember that, until further evidence, I now accuse nobody." Then, before shutting her out to go, by another passage, to her own place, "I must just wait," I wound up.

42.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 9

Henry James

I waited and waited, and the days, as they elapsed, took something from my consternation. A very few of them, in fact, passing, in constant sight of my pupils, without a fresh incident sufficed to give to grievous fancies and even to odious memories a kind of brush of the sponge. I have spoken of the surrender to their extraordinary childish grace as a thing I could actively cultivate, and it may be imagined if I neglected now to address myself to this source for whatever it would yield. Stranger than I can express, certainly, was the effort to struggle against my new lights; it would doubtless have been, however, a greater tension still had it not been so frequently successful. I used to wonder how my little charges could help guessing that I thought strange things about them; and the circumstance that these things only made them more interesting was not by itself a direct aid to keeping them in the dark. I trembled lest they should see that they *were* so immensely more interesting. Putting things at the worst, at all events, as in meditation I so often did, any clouding of their innocence could only be — blameless and foredoomed as they were — a reason the more for taking risks. There were moments when, by an irresistible impulse, I found myself catching them up and pressing them to my heart. As soon as I had done so I used to say to myself: "What will they think of that? Doesn't it betray too much?" It would have been easy to get into a sad, wild tangle about how much I might betray; but the real account, I feel, of the hours of peace that I could still enjoy was that the immediate charm of my companions was a beguilement still effective even under the shadow of the possibility that it was studied. For if it occurred to me that I might occasionally excite suspicion by the little outbreaks of my sharper passion for them, so too I remember wondering if I mightn't see a queerness in the traceable increase of their own demonstrations.

They were at this period extravagantly and preternaturally fond of me; which, after all, I could reflect, was no more than a graceful response in children perpetually bowed over and hugged. The homage of which they were so lavish succeeded, in truth, for my nerves, quite as well as if I never appeared to myself, as I may say, literally to catch them at a purpose in it. They had never, I think, wanted to do so many things for their poor protectress; I mean — though they got their lessons better and better, which was naturally what would please her most — in the way of diverting, entertaining, surprising her; reading her passages, telling her stories, acting her charades, pouncing out at her, in disguises, as animals and historical characters, and above all astonishing her by the "pieces" they had secretly got by heart and could interminably recite. I should never get to the bottom — were I to let myself go even now — of the prodigious private commentary, all under still more private correction, with which, in these days, I overscored their full hours. They had shown me from the first a facility for everything, a general faculty which, taking a fresh start, achieved remarkable flights. They got their little tasks as if they loved them, and indulged, from the mere exuberance of the gift, in the most unimposed little miracles of memory. They not only popped out at me as tigers and as Romans, but as Shakespeareans, astronomers, and navigators. This was so singularly the case that it had presumably much to do with the fact as to which, at the present day, I am at a loss for a different explanation: I allude to my unnatural composure on the subject of another school for Miles. What I remember is that I was content not, for the time, to open the question, and that contentment must have sprung from the sense of his perpetually striking show of

cleverness. He was too clever for a bad governess, for a parson's daughter, to spoil; and the strangest if not the brightest thread in the pensive embroidery I just spoke of was the impression I might have got, if I had dared to work it out, that he was under some influence operating in his small intellectual life as a tremendous incitement.

If it was easy to reflect, however, that such a boy could postpone school, it was at least as marked that for such a boy to have been "kicked out" by a school master was a mystification without end. Let me add that in their company now — and I was careful almost never to be out of it — I could follow no scent very far. We lived in a cloud of music and love and success and private theatricals. The musical sense in each of the children was of the quickest, but the elder in especial had a marvelous knack of catching and repeating. The schoolroom piano broke into all gruesome fancies; and when that failed there were confabulations in corners, with a sequel of one of them going out in the highest spirits in order to "come in" as something new. I had had brothers myself, and it was no revelation to me that little girls could be slavish idolaters of little boys. What surpassed everything was that there was a little boy in the world who could have for the inferior age, sex, and intelligence so fine a consideration. They were extraordinarily at one, and to say that they never either quarreled or complained is to make the note of praise coarse for their quality of sweetness. Sometimes, indeed, when I dropped into coarseness, I perhaps came across traces of little understandings between them by which one of them should keep me occupied while the other slipped away. There is a *naive* side, I suppose, in all diplomacy; but if my pupils practiced upon me, it was surely with the minimum of grossness. It was all in the other quarter that, after a lull, the grossness broke out.

I find that I really hang back; but I must take my plunge. In going on with the record of what was hideous at Bly, I not only challenge the most liberal faith — for which I little care; but — and this is another matter — I renew what I myself suffered, I again push my way through it to the end. There came suddenly an hour after which, as I look back, the affair seems to me to have been all pure suffering; but I have at least reached the heart of it, and the straightest road out is doubtless to advance. One evening — with nothing to lead up or to prepare it — I felt the cold touch of the impression that had breathed on me the night of my arrival and which, much lighter then, as I have mentioned, I should probably have made little of in memory had my subsequent sojourn been less agitated. I had not gone to bed; I sat reading by a couple of candles. There was a roomful of old books at Bly — last-century fiction, some of it, which, to the extent of a distinctly deprecated renown, but never to so much as that of a stray specimen, had reached the sequestered home and appealed to the unavowed curiosity of my youth. I remember that the book I had in my hand was Fielding's *Amelia,* also that I was wholly awake. I recall further both a general conviction that it was horribly late and a particular objection to looking at my watch. I figure, finally, that the white curtain draping, in the fashion of those days, the head of Flora's little bed, shrouded, as I had assured myself long before, the perfection of childish rest. I recollect in short that, though I was deeply interested in my author, I found myself, at the turn of a page and with his spell all scattered, looking straight up from him and hard at the door of my room. There was a moment during which I listened, reminded of the faint sense I had had, the first night, of there being something undefinably astir in the house, and noted the soft breath of the open casement just move the half-drawn blind. Then, with all the marks of a deliberation that must have seemed magnificent had there been anyone to admire it, I laid down my book, rose to my feet, and, taking a candle, went straight out of the room and, from the passage, on which my light made little impression, noiselessly closed and locked the door.

I can say now neither what determined nor what guided me, but I went straight along the lobby, holding my candle high, till I came within sight of the tall window that presided over the great turn of the staircase. At this point I precipitately found myself aware of three things. They were practically simultaneous, yet they had flashes of succession. My candle, under a bold flourish, went out, and I

perceived, by the uncovered window, that the yielding dusk of earliest morning rendered it unnecessary. Without it, the next instant, I saw that there was someone on the stair. I speak of sequences, but I required no lapse of seconds to stiffen myself for a third encounter with Quint. The apparition had reached the landing halfway up and was therefore on the spot nearest the window, where at sight of me, it stopped short and fixed me exactly as it had fixed me from the tower and from the garden. He knew me as well as I knew him; and so, in the cold, faint twilight, with a glimmer in the high glass and another on the polish of the oak stair below, we faced each other in our common intensity. He was absolutely, on this occasion, a living, detestable, dangerous presence. But that was not the wonder of wonders; I reserve this distinction for quite another circumstance: the circumstance that dread had unmistakably quitted me and that there was nothing in me there that didn't meet and measure him.

I had plenty of anguish after that extraordinary moment, but I had, thank God, no terror. And he knew I had not — I found myself at the end of an instant magnificently aware of this. I felt, in a fierce rigor of confidence, that if I stood my ground a minute I should cease — for the time, at least — to have him to reckon with; and during the minute, accordingly, the thing was as human and hideous as a real interview: hideous just because it *was* human, as human as to have met alone, in the small hours, in a sleeping house, some enemy, some adventurer, some criminal. It was the dead silence of our long gaze at such close quarters that gave the whole horror, huge as it was, its only note of the unnatural. If I had met a murderer in such a place and at such an hour, we still at least would have spoken. Something would have passed, in life, between us; if nothing had passed, one of us would have moved. The moment was so prolonged that it would have taken but little more to make me doubt if even *I* were in life. I can't express what followed it save by saying that the silence itself — which was indeed in a manner an attestation of my strength — became the element into which I saw the figure disappear; in which I definitely saw it turn as I might have seen the low wretch to which it had once belonged turn on receipt of an order, and pass, with my eyes on the villainous back that no hunch could have more disfigured, straight down the staircase and into the darkness in which the next bend was lost.

43.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 10

Henry James

I remained awhile at the top of the stair, but with the effect presently of understanding that when my visitor had gone, he had gone: then I returned to my room. The foremost thing I saw there by the light of the candle I had left burning was that Flora's little bed was empty; and on this I caught my breath with all the terror that, five minutes before, I had been able to resist. I dashed at the place in which I had left her lying and over which (for the small silk counterpane and the sheets were disarranged) the white curtains had been deceivingly pulled forward; then my step, to my unutterable relief, produced an answering sound: I perceived an agitation of the window blind, and the child, ducking down, emerged rosily from the other side of it. She stood there in so much of her candor and so little of her nightgown, with her pink bare feet and the golden glow of her curls. She looked intensely grave, and I had never had such a sense of losing an advantage acquired (the thrill of which had just been so prodigious) as on my consciousness that she addressed me with a reproach. "You naughty: where *have* you been?" — instead of challenging her own irregularity I found myself arraigned and explaining. She herself explained, for that matter, with the loveliest, eagerest simplicity. She had known suddenly, as she lay there, that I was out of the room, and had jumped up to see what had become of me. I had dropped, with the joy of her reappearance, back into my chair — feeling then, and then only, a little faint; and she had pattered straight over to me, thrown herself upon my knee, given herself to be held with the flame of the candle full in the wonderful little face that was still flushed with sleep. I remember closing my eyes an instant, yieldingly, consciously, as before the excess of something beautiful that shone out of the blue of her own. "You were looking for me out of the window?" I said. "You thought I might be walking in the grounds?"

"Well, you know, I thought someone was" — she never blanched as she smiled out that at me.

Oh, how I looked at her now! "And did you see anyone?"

"Ah, *no!*" she returned, almost with the full privilege of childish inconsequence, resentfully, though with a long sweetness in her little drawl of the negative.

At that moment, in the state of my nerves, I absolutely believed she lied; and if I once more closed my eyes it was before the dazzle of the three or four possible ways in which I might take this up. One of these, for a moment, tempted me with such singular intensity that, to withstand it, I must have gripped my little girl with a spasm that, wonderfully, she submitted to without a cry or a sign of fright. Why not break out at her on the spot and have it all over? — give it to her straight in her lovely little lighted face? "You see, you see, you *know* that you do and that you already quite suspect I believe it; therefore, why not frankly confess it to me, so that we may at least live with it together and learn perhaps, in the strangeness of our fate, where we are and what it means?" This solicitation dropped, alas, as it came: if I could immediately have succumbed to it I might have spared myself — well, you'll see what. Instead of succumbing I sprang again to my feet, looked at her bed, and took a helpless middle way. "Why did you pull the curtain over the place to make me think you were still there?"

Flora luminously considered, after which, with her little divine smile: "Because I don't like to frighten you!"

"But if I had, by your idea, gone out — ?"

She absolutely declined to be puzzled, she turned her eyes to the name of the candle as if the question were as irrelevant, or at any rate as impersonal, as Mrs. Marcet[1] or nine-times-nine. “Oh, but you know,” she quite adequately answered, “that you might come back, you dear, and that you *have!*” And after a little, when she had got into bed, I had, for a long time, by almost sitting on her to hold her hand, to prove that I recognized the pertinence of my return.

You may imagine the general complexion, from that moment, of my nights. I repeatedly sat up till I didn’t know when; I selected moments when my roommate unmistakably slept, and, stealing out, took noiseless turns in the passage and even pushed as far as to where I had last met Quint. But I never met him there again, and I may as well say at once that I on no other occasion saw him in the house. I just missed, on the staircase, on the other hand, a different adventure. Looking down it from the top I once recognized the presence of a woman seated on one of the lower steps with her back presented to me, her body half-bowed and her head, in an attitude of woe, in her hands. I had been there but an instant, however, when she vanished without looking round at me. I knew, nonetheless, exactly what dreadful face she had to show; and I wondered whether, if instead of being above I had been below, I should have had, for going up, the same nerve I had lately shown Quint. Well, there continued to be plenty of chance for nerve. On the eleventh night after my latest encounter with that gentleman — they were all numbered now — I had an alarm that perilously skirted it and that indeed, from the particular quality of its unexpectedness, proved quite my sharpest shock. It was precisely the first night during this series that, weary with watching, I had felt that I might again without laxity lay myself down at my old hour. I slept immediately and, as I afterward knew, till about one o’clock; but when I woke it was to sit straight up, as completely roused as if a hand had shook me. I had left a light burning, but it was now out, and I felt an instant certainty that Flora had extinguished it. This brought me to my feet and straight, in the darkness, to her bed, which I found she had left. A glance at the window enlightened me further, and the striking of a match completed the picture.

The child had again got up — this time blowing out the taper, and had again, for some purpose of observation or response, squeezed in behind the blind and was peering out into the night. That she now saw — as she had not, I had satisfied myself, the previous time — was proved to me by the fact that she was disturbed neither by my reillumination nor by the haste I made to get into slippers and into a wrap. Hidden, protected, absorbed, she evidently rested on the sill — the casement opened forward — and gave herself up. There was a great still moon to help her, and this fact had counted in my quick decision. She was face to face with the apparition we had met at the lake, and could now communicate with it as she had not then been able to do. What I, on my side, had to care for was, without disturbing her, to reach, from the corridor, some other window in the same quarter. I got to the door without her hearing me; I got out of it, closed it, and listened, from the other side, for some sound from her. While I stood in the passage I had my eyes on her brother’s door, which was but ten steps off and which, indescribably, produced in me a renewal of the strange impulse that I lately spoke of as my temptation. What if I should go straight in and march to *his* window? — what if, by risking to his boyish bewilderment a revelation of my motive, I should throw across the rest of the mystery the long halter of my boldness?

This thought held me sufficiently to make me cross to his threshold and pause again. I preternaturally listened; I figured to myself what might portentously be; I wondered if his bed were also empty and he too were secretly at watch. It was a deep, soundless minute, at the end of which my impulse failed. He was quiet; he might be innocent; the risk was hideous; I turned away. There was a figure in the grounds — a figure prowling for a sight, the visitor with whom Flora was engaged; but it was not the visitor most concerned with my boy. I hesitated afresh, but on other grounds and only a few seconds; then I had made my choice. There were empty rooms at Bly, and it was only a question of choosing the right one.

1. Jane Marcet (1769-1858). Author of many popular introductory textbooks on science, mainly for children.

The right one suddenly presented itself to me as the lower one — though high above the gardens — in the solid corner of the house that I have spoken of as the old tower. This was a large, square chamber, arranged with some state as a bedroom, the extravagant size of which made it so inconvenient that it had not for years, though kept by Mrs. Grose in exemplary order, been occupied. I had often admired it and I knew my way about in it; I had only, after just faltering at the first chill gloom of its disuse, to pass across it and unbolt as quietly as I could one of the shutters. Achieving this transit, I uncovered the glass without a sound and, applying my face to the pane, was able, the darkness without being much less than within, to see that I commanded the right direction. Then I saw something more. The moon made the night extraordinarily penetrable and showed me on the lawn a person, diminished by distance, who stood there motionless and as if fascinated, looking up to where I had appeared — looking, that is, not so much straight at me as at something that was apparently above me. There was clearly another person above me — there was a person on the tower; but the presence on the lawn was not in the least what I had conceived and had confidently hurried to meet. The presence on the lawn — I felt sick as I made it out — was poor little Miles himself.

44.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 11

Henry James

It was not till late next day that I spoke to Mrs. Grose; the rigor with which I kept my pupils in sight making it often difficult to meet her privately, and the more as we each felt the importance of not provoking — on the part of the servants quite as much as on that of the children — any suspicion of a secret flurry or of a discussion of mysteries. I drew a great security in this particular from her mere smooth aspect. There was nothing in her fresh face to pass on to others my horrible confidences. She believed me, I was sure, absolutely: if she hadn't I don't know what would have become of me, for I couldn't have borne the business alone. But she was a magnificent monument to the blessing of a want of imagination, and if she could see in our little charges nothing but their beauty and amiability, their happiness and cleverness, she had no direct communication with the sources of my trouble. If they had been at all visibly blighted or battered, she would doubtless have grown, on tracing it back, haggard enough to match them; as matters stood, however, I could feel her, when she surveyed them, with her large white arms folded and the habit of serenity in all her look, thank the Lord's mercy that if they were ruined the pieces would still serve. Flights of fancy gave place, in her mind, to a steady fireside glow, and I had already begun to perceive how, with the development of the conviction that — as time went on without a public accident — our young things could, after all, look out for themselves, she addressed her greatest solicitude to the sad case presented by their instructress. That, for myself, was a sound simplification: I could engage that, to the world, my face should tell no tales, but it would have been, in the conditions, an immense added strain to find myself anxious about hers.

At the hour I now speak of she had joined me, under pressure, on the terrace, where, with the lapse of the season, the afternoon sun was now agreeable; and we sat there together while, before us, at a distance, but within call if we wished, — the children strolled to and fro in one of their most manageable moods. They moved slowly, in unison, below us, over the lawn, the boy, as they went, reading aloud from a storybook and passing his arm round his sister to keep her quite in touch. Mrs. Grose watched them with positive placidity; then I caught the suppressed intellectual creak with which she conscientiously turned to take from me a view of the back of the tapestry. I had made her a receptacle of lurid things, but there was an odd recognition of my superiority — my accomplishments and my function — in her patience under my pain. She offered her mind to my disclosures as, had I wished to mix a witch's broth and proposed it with assurance, she would have held out a large clean saucepan. This had become thoroughly her attitude by the time that, in my recital of the events of the night, I reached the point of what Miles had said to me when, after seeing him, at such a monstrous hour almost on the very spot where he happened now to be, I had gone down to bring him in; choosing then, at the window, with a concentrated need of not alarming the house, rather that method than a signal more resonant I had left her meanwhile in little doubt of my small hope of representing with success even to her actual sympathy my sense of the real splendor of the little inspiration with which, after I had got him into the house, the boy met my final articulate challenge. As soon as I appeared in the moonlight on the terrace, he had come to me as straight as possible; on which I had taken his hand without a word and led him,

through the dark spaces, up the staircase where Quint had so hungrily hovered for him, along the lobby where I had listened and trembled, and so to his forsaken room.

Not a sound, on the way, had passed between us, and I had wondered — oh, *how* I had wondered! — if he were groping about in his little mind for something plausible and not too grotesque. It would tax his invention, certainly, and I felt, this time, over his real embarrassment, a curious thrill of triumph. It was a sharp trap for the inscrutable! He couldn't play any longer at innocence; so how the deuce would he get out of it? There beat in me indeed, with the passionate throb of this question, an equal dumb appeal as to how the deuce *I* should. I was confronted at last, as never yet, with all the risk attached even now to sounding my own horrid note. I remember in fact that as we pushed into his little chamber, where the bed had not been slept in at all and the window, uncovered to the moonlight, made the place so clear that there was no need of striking a match — I remember how I suddenly dropped, sank upon the edge of the bed from the force of the idea that he must know how he really, as they say, "had" me. He could do what he liked, with all his cleverness to help him, so long as I should continue to defer to the old tradition of the criminality of those caretakers of the young who minister to superstitions and fears. He "had" me indeed, and in a cleft stick; for who would ever absolve me, who would consent that I should go unhung, if, by the faintest tremor of an overture, I were the first to introduce into our perfect intercourse an element so dire? No, no: it was useless to attempt to convey to Mrs. Grose, just as it is scarcely less so to attempt to suggest here, how, in our short, stiff brush in the dark, he fairly shook me with admiration. I was of course thoroughly kind and merciful; never, never yet had I placed on his little shoulders hands of such tenderness as those with which, while I rested against the bed, I held him there well under fire. I had no alternative but, in form at least, to put it to him.

"You must tell me now — and all the truth. What did you go out for? What were you doing there?"

I can still see his wonderful smile, the whites of his beautiful eyes, and the uncovering of his little teeth shine to me in the dusk. "If I tell you why, will you understand?" My heart, at this, leaped into my mouth. *Would* he tell me why? I found no sound on my lips to press it, and I was aware of replying only with a vague, repeated, grimacing nod. He was gentleness itself, and while I wagged my head at him he stood there more than ever a little fairy prince. It was his brightness indeed that gave me a respite. Would it be so great if he were really going to tell me? "Well," he said at last, "just exactly in order that you should do this."

"Do what?"

"Think me — for a change — *bad!*" I shall never forget the sweetness and gaiety with which he brought out the word, nor how, on top of it, he bent forward and kissed me. It was practically the end of everything. I met his kiss and I had to make, while I folded him for a minute in my arms, the most stupendous effort not to cry. He had given exactly the account of himself that permitted least of my going behind it, and it was only with the effect of confirming my acceptance of it that, as I presently glanced about the room, I could say —

"Then you didn't undress at all?"

He fairly glittered in the gloom. "Not at all. I sat up and read."

"And when did you go down?"

"At midnight. When I'm bad I *am* bad!"

"I see, I see it's charming. But how could you be sure I would know it?"

"Oh, I arranged that with Flora." His answers rang out with a readiness! "She was to get up and look out."

"Which is what she did do." It was I who fell into the trap!"

"So she disturbed you, and, to see what she was looking at, you also looked — you saw."

"While you," I concurred, "caught your death in the night air!"

He literally bloomed so from this exploit that he could afford radiantly to assent. "How otherwise

should I have been bad enough?" he asked. Then, after another embrace, the incident and our interview dosed on my recognition of all the reserves of goodness that, for his joke, he had been able to draw upon.

45.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 12

Henry James

The particular impression I had received proved in the morning light, I repeat, not quite successfully presentable to Mrs. Grose, though I reinforced it with the mention of still another remark that he had made before we separated. “It all lies in half a dozen words,” I said to her, “words that really settle the matter. ‘Think, you know, what I *might* do!’ He threw that off to show me how good he is. He knows down to the ground what he ‘might’ do. That’s what he gave them a taste of at school.”

“Lord, you do change!” cried my friend.

“I don’t change — I simply make it out. The four, depend upon it, perpetually meet. If on either of these last nights you had been with either child, you would clearly have understood. The more I’ve watched and waited the more I’ve felt that if there were nothing else to make it sure it would be made so by the systematic silence of each. *Never,* by a slip of the tongue, have they so much as alluded to either of their old friends, any more than Miles has alluded to his expulsion. Oh, yes, we may sit here and look at them, and they may show off to us there to their fill; but even while they pretend to be lost in their fairytale they’re steeped in their vision of the dead restored. He’s not reading to her,” I declared; “they’re talking of *them* — they’re talking horrors! I go on, I know, as if I were crazy; and it’s a wonder I’m not. What I’ve seen would have made *you* so; but it has only made me more lucid, made me get hold of still other things.”

My lucidity must have seemed awful, but the charming creatures who were victims of it, passing and repassing in their interlocked sweetness, gave my colleague something to hold on by; and I felt how tight she held as, without stirring in the breath of my passion, she covered them still with her eyes. “Of what other things have you got hold?”

“Why, of the very things that have delighted, fascinated, and yet, at bottom, as I now so strangely see, mystified and troubled me. Their more than earthly beauty, their absolutely unnatural goodness. It’s a game,” I went on; “it’s a policy and a fraud!”

“On the part of little darlings — ?”

“As yet mere lovely babies? Yes, mad as that seems!” The very act of bringing it out really helped me to trace it — follow it all up and piece it all together. “They haven’t been good — they’ve only been absent. It has been easy to live with them, because they’re simply leading a life of their own. They’re not mine — they’re not ours. They’re his and they’re hers!”

“Quint’s and that woman’s?”

“Quint’s and that woman’s. They want to get to them.”

Oh, how, at this, poor Mrs. Grose appeared to study them! “But for what?”

“For the love of all the evil that, in those dreadful days, the pair put into them. And to ply them with that evil still, to keep up the work of demons, is what brings the others back.”

“Laws!” said my friend under her breath. The exclamation was homely, but it revealed a real acceptance of my further proof of what, in the bad time — for there had been a worse even than this! — must have occurred. There could have been no such justification for me as the plain assent of her experience to whatever depth of depravity I found credible in our brace of scoundrels. It was in obvious

submission of memory that she brought out after a moment: "They *were* rascals! But what can they now do?" she pursued.

"Do?" I echoed so loud that Miles and Flora, as they passed at their distance, paused an instant in their walk and looked at us. "Don't they do enough?" I demanded in a lower tone, while the children, having smiled and nodded and kissed hands to us, resumed their exhibition. We were held by it a minute; then I answered: "They can destroy them!" At this my companion did turn, but the inquiry she launched was a silent one, the effect of which was to make me more explicit. "They don't know, as yet, quite how — but they're trying hard. They're seen only across, as it were, and beyond — in strange places and on high places, the top of towers, the roof of houses, the outside of windows, the further edge of pools; but there's a deep design, on either side, to shorten the distance and overcome the obstacle; and the success of the tempters is only a question of time. They've only to keep to their suggestions of danger."

"For the children to come?"

"And perish in the attempt!" Mrs. Grose slowly got up, and I scrupulously added: "Unless, of course, we can prevent!"

Standing there before me while I kept my seat, she visibly turned things over. "Their uncle must do the preventing. He must take them away."

"And who's to make him?"

She had been scanning the distance, but she now dropped on me a foolish face. "You, miss."

"By writing to him that his house is poisoned and his little nephew and niece mad?"

"But if they *are,* miss?"

"And if I am myself, you mean? That's charming news to be sent him by a governess whose prime undertaking was to give him no worry."

Mrs. Grose considered, following the children again. "Yes, he do hate worry. That was the great reason — "

"Why those fiends took him in so long? No doubt, though his indifference must have been awful. As I'm not a fiend, at any rate, I shouldn't take him in."

My companion, after an instant and for all answer, sat down again and grasped my arm. "Make him at any rate come to you."

I stared. "To *me?*" I had a sudden fear of what she might do. "'Him'?"

"He ought to *be* here — he ought to help."

I quickly rose, and I think I must have shown her a queerer face than ever yet. "You see me asking him for a visit?" No, with her eyes on my face she evidently couldn't. Instead of it even — as a woman reads another — she could see what I myself saw: his derision, his amusement, his contempt for the breakdown of my resignation at being left alone and for the fine machinery I had set in motion to attract his attention to my slighted charms. She didn't know — no one knew — how proud I had been to serve him and to stick to our terms; yet she nonetheless took the measure, I think, of the warning I now gave her. "If you should so lose your head as to appeal to him for me — "

She was really frightened. "Yes, miss?"

"I would leave, on the spot, both him and you."

46.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 13

Henry James

It was all very well to join them, but speaking to them proved quite as much as ever an effort beyond my strength — offered, in close quarters, difficulties as insurmountable as before. This situation continued a month, and with new aggravations and particular notes, the note above all, sharper and sharper, of the small ironic consciousness on the part of my pupils. It was not, I am as sure today as I was sure then, my mere infernal imagination: it was absolutely traceable that they were aware of my predicament and that this strange relation made, in a manner, for a long time, the air in which we moved. I don't mean that they had their tongues in their cheeks or did anything vulgar, for that was not one of their dangers: I do mean, on the other hand, that the element of the unnamed and untouched became, between us, greater than any other, and that so much avoidance could not have been so successfully effected without a great deal of tacit arrangement. It was as if, at moments, we were perpetually coming into sight of subjects before which we must stop short, turning suddenly out of alleys that we perceived to be blind, closing with a little bang that made us look at each other — for, like all bangs, it was something louder than we had intended — the doors we had indiscreetly opened. All roads lead to Rome, and there were times when it might have struck us that almost every branch of study or subject of conversation skirted forbidden ground. Forbidden ground was the question of the return of the dead in general and of whatever, in especial, might survive, in memory, of the friends little children had lost. There were days when I could have sworn that one of them had, with a small invisible nudge, said to the other: "She thinks she'll do it this time — but she *won't!*" To "do it" would have been to indulge for instance — and for once in a way — in some direct reference to the lady who had prepared them for my discipline. They had a delightful endless appetite for passages in my own history, to which I had again and again treated them; they were in possession of everything that had ever happened to me, had had, with every circumstance the story of my smallest adventures and of those of my brothers and sisters and of the cat and the dog at home, as well as many particulars of the eccentric nature of my father, of the furniture and arrangement of our house, and of the conversation of the old women of our village. There were things enough, taking one with another, to chatter about, if one went very fast and knew by instinct when to go round. They pulled with an art of their own the strings of my invention and my memory; and nothing else perhaps, when I thought of such occasions afterward, gave me so the suspicion of being watched from under cover. It was in any case over *my* life, *my* past, and *my* friends alone that we could take anything like our ease — a state of affairs that led them sometimes without the least pertinence to break out into sociable reminders. I was invited — with no visible connection — to repeat afresh Goody Gosling's celebrated *mot* or to confirm the details already supplied as to the cleverness of the vicarage pony.

It was partly at such junctures as these and partly at quite different ones that, with the turn my matters had now taken, my predicament, as I have called it, grew most sensible. The fact that the days passed for me without another encounter ought, it would have appeared, to have done something toward soothing my nerves. Since the light brush, that second night on the upper landing, of the presence of a woman at the foot of the stair, I had seen nothing, whether in or out of the house, that one had better not have seen. There was many a corner round which I expected to come upon Quint, and many a situation

that, in a merely sinister way, would have favored the appearance of Miss Jessel. The summer had turned, the summer had gone, the autumn had dropped upon Bly and had blown out half our lights. The place, with its gray sky and withered garlands, its bared spaces and scattered dead leaves, was like a theater after the performance — all strewn with crumpled playbills. There were exactly states of the air, conditions of sound and of stillness, unspeakable impressions of the *kind* of ministering moment, that brought back to me, long enough to catch it, the feeling of the medium in which, that June evening out of doors, I had had my first sight of Quint, and in which, too, at those other instants, I had, after seeing him through the window, looked for him in vain in the circle of shrubbery. I recognized the signs, the portents — I recognized the moment, the spot. But they remained unaccompanied and empty, and I continued unmolested; if unmolested one could call a young woman whose sensibility had, in the most extraordinary fashion, not declined but deepened. I had said in my talk with Mrs. Grose on that horrid scene of Flora's by the lake and had perplexed her by so saying — that it would from that moment distress me much more to lose my power than to keep it. I had then expressed what was vividly in my mind: the truth that, whether the children really saw or not — since, that is, it was not yet definitely proved — I greatly preferred, as a safeguard, the fullness of my own exposure. I was ready to know the very worst that was to be known. What I had then had an ugly glimpse of was that my eyes might be sealed just while theirs were most opened. Well, my eyes *were* sealed, it appeared, at present — a consummation for which it seemed blasphemous not to thank God. There was, alas, a difficulty about that: I would have thanked him with all my soul had I not had in a proportionate measure this conviction of the secret of my pupils.

How can I retrace today the strange steps of my obsession? There were times of our being together when I would have been ready to swear that, literally, in my presence, but with my direct sense of it closed, they had visitors who were known and were welcome. Then it was that, had I not been deterred by the very chance that such an injury might prove greater than the injury to be averted, my exultation would have broken out. "They're here, they're here, you little wretches," I would have cried, "and you can't deny it now!" The little wretches denied it with all the added volume of their sociability and their tenderness, in just the crystal depths of which — like the flash of a fish in a stream — the mockery of their advantage peeped up. The shock, in truth, had sunk into me still deeper than I knew on the night when, looking out to see either Quint or Miss Jessel under the stars, I had beheld the boy over whose rest I watched and who had immediately brought in with him — had straightway, there, turned it on me the lovely upward look with which, from the battlements above me, the hideous apparition of Quint had played. If it was a question of a scare, my discovery on this occasion had scared me more than any other, and it was in the condition of nerves produced by it that I made my actual inductions. They harassed me so that sometimes, at odd moments, I shut myself up audibly to rehearse — it was at once a fantastic relief and a renewed despair — the manner in which I might come to the point. I approached it from one side and the other while, in my room, I flung myself about, but I always broke down in the monstrous utterance of names. As they died away on my lips, I said to myself that I should indeed help them to represent something infamous if, by pronouncing them, I should violate as rare a little case of instinctive delicacy as any school-room, probably, had ever known. When I said to myself: "*They* have the manners to be silent, and you, trusted as you are, the baseness to speak!" I felt myself crimson and I covered my face with my hands. After these secret scenes I chattered more than ever, going on volubly enough till one of our prodigious, palpable hushes occurred — I can call them nothing else — the strange, dizzy lift or swim (I try for terms!) into a stillness, a pause of all life, that had nothing to do with the more or less noise that at the moment we might be engaged in making and that I could hear through any deepened exhilaration or quickened recitation or louder strum of the piano. Then it was that the others, the outsiders, were there. Though they were not angels, they "passed," as the French say causing me,

while they stayed, to tremble with the fear of their addressing to their younger victims some yet more infernal message or more vivid image than they had thought good enough for myself.

What it was most impossible to get rid of was the cruel idea that, whatever I had seen, Miles and Flora saw *more* — things terrible and unguessable and that sprang from dreadful passages of intercourse in the past. Such things naturally left on the surface, for the time, a child which we vociferously denied that we felt; and we had, all three, with repetition, got into such splendid training that we went, each time, almost automatically, to mark the close of the incident, through the very same movements. It was striking of the children, at all events to kiss me inveterately with a kind of wild irrelevance and never to fail — one or the other — of the precious question that had helped us through many a peril. "When do you think he *will* come? Don't you think we *ought* to write?" — there was nothing like that inquiry, we found by experience, for carrying off an awkwardness. "He" of course was their uncle in Harley Street; and we lived in much profusion of theory that he might at any moment arrive to mingle in our circle. It was impossible to have given less encouragement than he had done to such a doctrine, but if we had not had the doctrine to fall back upon we should have deprived each other of some of our finest exhibitions. He never wrote to them — that may have been selfish, but it was a part of the flattery of his trust of me; for the way in which a man pays his highest tribute to a woman is apt to be but by the more festal celebration of one of the sacred laws of his comfort; and I held that I carried out the spirit of the pledge given not to appeal to him when I let my charges understand that their own letters were but charming literary exercises. They were too beautiful to be posted; I kept them myself; I have them all to this hour. This was a rule indeed which only added to the satiric effect of my being plied with the supposition that he might at any moment be among us. It was exactly as if my charges knew how almost more awkward than anything else that might be for me. There appears to me, moreover, as I look back, no note in all this more extraordinary than the mere fact that, in spite of my tension and of their triumph, I never lost patience with them. Adorable they must in truth have been, I now reflect, that I didn't in these days hate them! Would exasperation, however, if relief had longer been postponed, finally have betrayed me? It little matters, for relief arrived. I call it relief, though it was only the relief that a snap brings to a strain or the burst of a thunderstorm to a day of suffocation. It was at least change, and it came with a rush.

47.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 14

Henry James

Walking to church a certain Sunday morning, I had little Miles at my side and his sister, in advance of us and at Mrs. Grose's, well in sight. It was a crisp, clear day, the first of its order for some time; the night had brought a touch of frost, and the autumn air, bright and sharp, made the church bells almost gay. It was an odd accident of thought that I should have happened at such a moment to be particularly and very gratefully struck with the obedience of my little charges. Why did they never resent my inexorable, my perpetual society? Something or other had brought nearer home to me that I had all but pinned the boy to my shawl and that, in the way our companions were marshaled before me, I might have appeared to provide against some danger of rebellion. I was like a gaoler with an eye to possible surprises and escapes. But all this belonged — I mean their magnificent little surrender — just to the special array of the facts that were most abysmal. Turned out for Sunday by his uncle's tailor, who had had a free hand and a notion of pretty waistcoats and of his grand little air, Miles's whole title to independence, the rights of his sex and situation, were so stamped upon him that if he had suddenly struck for freedom I should have had nothing to say. I was by the strangest of chances wondering how I should meet him when the revolution unmistakably occurred. I call it a revolution because I now see how, with the word he spoke, the curtain rose on the last act of my dreadful drama, and the catastrophe was precipitated. "Look here, my dear, you know," he charmingly said, "when in the world, please, am I going back to school?"

Transcribed here the speech sounds harmless enough, particularly as uttered in the sweet, high, casual pipe with which, at all interlocutors, but above all at his eternal governess, he threw off intonations as if he were tossing roses. There was something in them that always made one "catch," and I caught, at any rate, now so effectually that I stopped as short as if one of the trees of the park had fallen across the road. There was something new, on the spot, between us, and he was perfectly aware that I recognized it, though, to enable me to do so, he had no need to look a whit less candid and charming than usual. I could feel in him how he already, from my at first finding nothing to reply, perceived the advantage he had gained. I was so slow to find anything that he had plenty of time, after a minute, to continue with his suggestive but inconclusive smile: "You know, my dear, that for a fellow to be with a lady *always* — !" His "my dear" was constantly on his lips for me, and nothing could have expressed more the exact shade of the sentiment with which I desired to inspire my pupils than its fond familiarity. It was so respectfully easy.

But, oh, how I felt that at present I must pick my own phrases! I remember that, to gain time, I tried to laugh, and I seemed to see in the beautiful face with which he watched me how ugly and queer I looked. "And always with the same lady?" I returned.

He neither blanched nor winked. The whole thing was virtually out between us. "Ah, of course, she's a jolly, 'perfect' lady; but, after all, I'm a fellow, don't you see? that's — well, getting on."

I lingered there with him an instant ever so kindly. "Yes, you're getting on." Oh, but I felt helpless!

I have kept to this day the heartbreaking little idea of how he seemed to know that and to play with it. "And you can't say I've not been awfully good, can you?"

I laid my hand on his shoulder, for, though I felt how much better it would have been to walk on, I was not yet quite able. “No, I can’t say that, Miles.”

“Except just that one night, you know — !”

“That one night?” I couldn’t look as straight as he.

“Why, when I went down — went out of the house.”

“Oh, yes. But I forget what you did it for.”

“You forget?” — he spoke with the sweet extravagance of childish reproach. “Why, it was to show you I could!”

“Oh, yes, you could.”

“And I can again.”

I felt that I might, perhaps, after all, succeed in keeping my wits about me. “Certainly. But you won’t.”

“No, not *that* again. It was nothing.”

“It was nothing,” I said. “But we must go on.”

He resumed our walk with me, passing his hand into my arm. “Then when *am* I going back?”

I wore, in turning it over, my most responsible air. “Were you very happy at school?”

He just considered. “Oh, I’m happy enough anywhere!”

“Well, then,” I quavered, “if you’re just as happy here — ”

“Ah, but that isn’t everything! Of course *you* know a lot — ”

“But you hint that you know almost as much?” I risked as he paused.

“Not half I want to!” Miles honestly professed. “But it isn’t so much that.”

“What is it, then?”

“Well — I want to see more life.”

“I see; I see.” We had arrived within sight of the church and of various persons, including several of the household of Bly, on their way to it and clustered about the door to see us go in. I quickened our step; I wanted to get there before the question between us opened up much further; I reflected hungrily that, for more than an hour, he would have to be silent; and I thought with envy of the comparative dusk of the pew and of the almost spiritual help of the hassock on which I might bend my knees. I seemed literally to be running a race with some confusion to which he was about to reduce me, but I felt that he had got in first when, before we had even entered the churchyard, he threw out —

“I want my own sort!”

It literally made me bound forward. “There are not many of your own sort, Miles!” I laughed. “Unless perhaps dear little Flora!”

“You really compare me to a baby girl?”

This found me singularly weak. “Don’t you, then, *love* our sweet Flora?”

“If I didn’t — and you, too; if I didn’t — !” he repeated as if retreating for a jump, yet leaving his thought so unfinished that, after we had come into the gate, another stop, which he imposed on me by the pressure of his arm, had become inevitable. Mrs. Grose and Flora had passed into the church, the other worshippers had followed, and we were, for the minute, alone among the old, thick graves. We had paused, on the path from the gate, by a low, oblong, tablelike tomb.

“Yes, if you didn’t — ?”

He looked, while I waited, about at the graves. “Well, you know what!” But he didn’t move, and he presently produced something that made me drop straight down on the stone slab, as if suddenly to rest. “Does my uncle think what *you* think?”

I markedly rested. “How do you know what I think?”

“Ah, well, of course I don’t; for it strikes me you never tell me. But I mean does *he* know?”

“Know what, Miles?”

“Why, the way I’m going on.”

I perceived quickly enough that I could make, to this inquiry, no answer that would not involve something of a sacrifice of my employer. Yet it appeared to me that we were all, at Bly, sufficiently sacrificed to make that venial. "I don't think your uncle much cares."

Miles, on this, stood looking at me. "Then don't you think he can be made to?"

"In what way?"

"Why, by his coming down."

"But who'll get him to come down?"

"*I* will!" the boy said with extraordinary brightness and emphasis. He gave me another look charged with that expression and then marched off alone into church.

48.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 15

Henry James

The business was practically settled from the moment I never followed him. It was a pitiful surrender to agitation, but my being aware of this had somehow no power to restore me. I only sat there on my tomb and read into what my little friend had said to me the fullness of its meaning; by the time I had grasped the whole of which I had also embraced, for absence, the pretext that I was ashamed to offer my pupils and the rest of the congregation such an example of delay. What I said to myself above all was that Miles had got something out of me and that the proof of it, for him, would be just this awkward collapse. He had got out of me that there was something I was much afraid of and that he should probably be able to make use of my fear to gain, for his own purpose, more freedom. My fear was of having to deal with the intolerable question of the grounds of his dismissal from school, for that was really but the question of the horrors gathered behind. That his uncle should arrive to treat with me of these things was a solution that, strictly speaking, I ought now to have desired to bring on; but I could so little face the ugliness and the pain of it that I simply procrastinated and lived from hand to mouth. The boy, to my deep discomposure, was immensely in the right, was in a position to say to me: “Either you clear up with my guardian the mystery of this interruption of my studies, or you cease to expect me to lead with you a life that’s so unnatural for a boy.” What was so unnatural for the particular boy I was concerned with was this sudden revelation of a consciousness and a plan.

That was what really overcame me, what prevented my going in. I walked round the church, hesitating, hovering; I reflected that I had already, with him, hurt myself beyond repair. Therefore I could patch up nothing, and it was too extreme an effort to squeeze beside him into the pew: he would be so much more sure than ever to pass his arm into mine and make me sit there for an hour in close, silent contact with his commentary on our talk. For the first minute since his arrival I wanted to get away from him. As I paused beneath the high east window and listened to the sounds of worship, I was taken with an impulse that might master me, I felt, completely should I give it the least encouragement. I might easily put an end to my predicament by getting away altogether. Here was my chance; there was no one to stop me; I could give the whole thing up — turn my back and retreat. It was only a question of hurrying again, for a few preparations, to the house which the attendance at church of so many of the servants would practically have left unoccupied. No one, in short, could blame me if I should just drive desperately off. What was it to get away if I got away only till dinner? That would be in a couple of hours, at the end of which — I had the acute prevision — my little pupils would play at innocent wonder about my nonappearance in their train.

“What *did* you do, you naughty, bad thing? Why in the world, to worry us so — and take our thoughts off, too, don’t you know? — did you desert us at the very door?” I couldn’t meet such questions nor, as they asked them, their false little lovely eyes; yet it was all so exactly what I should have to meet that, as the prospect grew sharp to me, I at last let myself go.

I got, so far as the immediate moment was concerned, away; I came straight out of the churchyard and, thinking hard, retraced my steps through the park. It seemed to me that by the time I reached the house I had made up my mind I would fly. The Sunday stillness both of the approaches and of the

interior, in which I met no one, fairly excited me with a sense of opportunity. Were I to get off quickly, this way, I should get off without a scene, without a word. My quickness would have to be remarkable, however, and the question of a conveyance was the great one to settle. Tormented, in the hall, with difficulties and obstacles, I remember sinking down at the foot of the staircase — suddenly collapsing there on the lowest step and then, with a revulsion, recalling that it was exactly where more than a month before, in the darkness of night and just so bowed with evil things I had seen the specter of the most horrible of women. At this I was able to straighten my self; I went the rest of the way up; I made, in my bewilderment, for the schoolroom, where there were objects belonging to me that I should have to take. But I opened the door to find again, in a flash, my eyes unsealed. In the presence of what I saw I reeled straight back upon my resistance.

Seated at my own table in clear noonday light I saw a person whom without my previous experience I should have taken at the first blush for some housemaid who might have stayed at home to look after the place and who, availing herself of rare relief from observation and of the schoolroom table and my pens, ink, and paper, had applied herself to the considerable effort of a letter to her sweetheart. There was an effort in the way that, while her arms rested on the table, her hands with evident weariness supported her head; but at the moment I took this in I had already become aware that, in spite of my entrance, her attitude strangely persisted. Then it was — with the very act of its announcing itself — that her identity flared up in a change of posture. She rose, not as if she had heard me, but with an indescribable grand melancholy of indifference and detachment, and, within a dozen feet of me, stood there as my vile predecessor. Dishonored and tragic, she was all before me; but even as I fixed and, for memory, secured it, the awful image passed away. Dark as midnight in her black dress her haggard beauty and her unutterable woe, she had looked at me long enough to appear to say that her right to sit at my table was as good as mine to sit at hers. While these instants lasted, indeed, I had the extraordinary chill of feeling that it was I who was the intruder. It was as a wild protest against it that, I actually addressing her — "You terrible, miserable woman!" — I heard myself break into a sound that, by the open door, rang through the long passage and the empty house. She looked at me as if she heard me, but I had recovered myself and cleared the air. There was nothing in the room the next minute but the sunshine and a sense that I must stay.

49.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 16

Henry James

I had so perfectly expected that the return of my pupils would be marked by a demonstration that I was freshly upset at having to take into account that they were dumb about my absence. Instead of gaily denouncing and caressing me, they made no allusion to my having failed them, and I was left, for the time, on perceiving that she too said nothing, to study Mrs. Grose's odd face. I did this to such purpose that I made sure they had in some way bribed her to silence; a silence that, however, I would engage to break down on the first private opportunity. This opportunity came before tea: I secured five minutes with her in the housekeeper's room, where, in the twilight, amid a smell of lately baked bread, but with the place all swept and garnished[1], I found her sitting in pained placidity before the fire. So I see her still, so I see her best: facing the flame from her straight chair in the dusky, shining room, a large clean image of the "put away" — of drawers closed and locked and rest without a remedy.

"Oh, yes, they asked me to say nothing; and to please them — so long as they were there — of course I promised. But what had happened to you?"

"I only went with you for the walk," I said. "I had then to come back to meet a friend."

She showed her surprise. "A friend — *you?*"

"Oh, yes, I have a couple!" I laughed. "But did the children give you a reason?"

"For not alluding to your leaving us? Yes; they said you would like it better. Do you like it better?"

My face had made her rueful. "No, I like it worse!" But after an instant I added: "Did they say why I should like it better?"

"No; Master Miles only said, 'We must do nothing but what she likes!' "

"I wish indeed he would! And what did Flora say?"

"Miss Flora was too sweet. She said, 'Oh, of course, of course!' — and I said the same."

I thought a moment. "You were too sweet, too. I can hear you all. But nonetheless, between Miles and me, it's now all out."

"All out?" My companion stared. "But what, miss?"

"Everything. It doesn't matter. I've made up my mind. I came home, my dear," I went on, "for a talk with Miss Jessel."

I had by this time formed the habit of having Mrs. Grose literally well in hand in advance of my sounding that note: so that even now, as she bravely blinked under the signal of my word, I could keep her comparatively firm. "A talk! Do you mean she spoke?"

"It came to that. I found her, on my return, in the schoolroom."

"And what did she say?" I can hear the good woman still, and the candor of her stupefaction.

"That she suffers the torments — !"

It was this, of a truth, that made her, as she filled out my picture, gape. "Do you mean," she faltered, " — of the lost?"

"Of the lost. Of the damned. And that's why, to share them — " I faltered myself with the horror of it.

1. Possible allusion to Matthew 12:44. Jesus tells the Pharisees that they are inhabited by an unclean spirit who returns to the house despite the fact that it is "swept, and garnished."

But my companion, with less imagination, kept me up. “To share them — ?”

“She wants Flora.” Mrs. Grose might, as I gave it to her, fairly have fallen away from me had I not been prepared. I still held her there, to show I was. “As I’ve told you, however, it doesn’t matter.”

“Because you’ve made up your mind? But to what?”

“To everything.”

“And what do you call ‘everything’?”

“Why, sending for their uncle.”

“Oh, miss, in pity do,” my friend broke out.

“Ah, but I will, I *will!* I see it’s the only way. What’s ‘out,’ as I told you, with Miles is that if he thinks I’m afraid to and has ideas of what he gains by that — he shall see he’s mistaken. Yes, yes; his uncle shall have it here from me on the spot (and before the boy himself, if necessary) that if I’m to be reproached with having done nothing again about more school — ”

“Yes, miss — ” my companion pressed me.

“Well, there’s that awful reason.”

There were now clearly so many of these for my poor colleague that she was excusable for being vague. “But — a — which?”

“Why, the letter from his old place.”

“You’ll show it to the master?”

“I ought to have done so on the instant.”

“Oh, no!” said Mrs. Grose with decision.

“I’ll put it before him,” I went on inexorably, “that I can’t undertake to work the question on behalf of a child who has been expelled — ”

“For we’ve never in the least known what!” Mrs. Grose declared.

“For wickedness. For what else — when he’s so clever and beautiful and perfect? Is he stupid? Is he untidy? Is he infirm? Is he ill-natured? He’s exquisite — so it can be only *that;* and that would open up the whole thing. After all,” I said, “it’s their uncle’s fault. If he left here such people — !”

“He didn’t really in the least know them. The fault’s mine” She had turned quite pale.

“Well, you shan’t suffer,” I answered.

“The children shan’t!” she emphatically returned.

I was silent awhile; we looked at each other, “Then what am I to tell him?”

“You needn’t tell him anything. *I’ll* tell him.”

I measured this. “Do you mean you’ll write — ?” Remembering she couldn’t, I caught myself up. “How do you communicate?”

“I tell the bailiff. *He* writes.”

“And should you like him to write our story?”

My question had a sarcastic force that I had not fully intended, and it made her, after a moment, inconsequently break down. The tears were again in her eyes. “Ah, miss, *you* write!”

“Well — tonight,” I at last answered; and on this we separated.

50.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 17

Henry James

I went so far, in the evening, as to make a beginning. The weather had changed back, a great wind was abroad, and beneath the lamp, in my room, with Flora at peace beside me, I sat for a long time before a blank sheet of paper and listened to the lash of the rain and the batter of the gusts. Finally I went out, taking a candle; I crossed the passage and listened a minute at Miles's door. What, under my endless obsession, I had been impelled to listen for was some betrayal of his not being at rest, and I presently caught one, but not in the form I had expected. His voice tinkled out. "I say, you there — come in." It was a gaiety in the gloom!

I went in with my light and found him, in bed, very wide awake, but very much at his ease. "Well, what are *you* up to?" he asked with a grace of sociability in which it occurred to me that Mrs. Grose, had she been present, might have looked in vain for proof that anything was "out."

I stood over him with my candle. "How did you know I was there?"

"Why, of course I heard you. Did you fancy you made no noise? You're like a troop of cavalry!" he beautifully laughed.

"Then you weren't asleep?"

"Not much! I lie awake and think."

I had put my candle, designedly, a short way off, and then, as he held out his friendly old hand to me, had sat down on the edge of his bed. "What is it," I asked, "that you think of?"

"What in the world, my dear, but *you?*"

"Ah, the pride I take in your appreciation doesn't insist on that! I had so far rather you slept."

"Well, I think also, you know, of this queer business of ours."

I marked the coolness of his firm little hand. "Of what queer business, Miles?"

"Why, the way you bring me up. And all the rest!"

I fairly held my breath a minute, and even from my glimmering taper there was light enough to show how he smiled up at me from his pillow. "What do you mean by all me rest?"

"Oh, you know, you know!"

I could say nothing for a minute, though I felt, as I held his hand and our eyes continued to meet, that my silence had all the air of admitting his charge and that nothing in the whole world of reality was perhaps at that moment so fabulous as our actual relation. "Certainly you shall go back to school," I said, "if it be that that troubles you. But not to the old place — we must find another, a better. How could I know it did trouble you, this question, when you never told me so, never spoke of it at all?" His dear, listening face, framed in its smooth whiteness, made him for the minute as appealing as some wistful patient in a children's hospital; and I would have given, as the resemblance came to me, all I possessed on earth really to be the nurse or the sister of charity who might have helped to cure him. Well, even as it was, I perhaps might help! "Do you know you've never said a word to me about your school — I mean the old one; never mentioned it in any way?"

He seemed to wonder; he smiled with the same loveliness. But he clearly gained time; he waited, he called for guidance. "Haven't I?" It wasn't for *me* to help him — it was for the thing I had met!

Something in his tone and the expression of his face, as I got this from him, set my heart aching with such a pang as it had never yet known; so unutterably touching was it to see his little brain puzzled and his little resources taxed to play, under the spell laid on him, a part of innocence and consistency. “No, never — from the hour you came back, You’ve never mentioned to me one of your masters, one of your comrades, nor the least little thing that ever happened to you at school. Never, little Miles — no, never — have you given me an inkling of anything that *may* have happened there. Therefore you can fancy how much I’m in the dark. Until you came out, that way, this morning, you had, since the first hour I saw you, scarce even made a reference to anything in your previous life. You seemed so perfectly to accept the present.” It was extraordinary how my absolute conviction of his secret precocity (or whatever I might call the poison of an influence that I dared but half to phrase) made him, in spite of the faint breath of his inward trouble, appear as accessible as an older person — imposed him almost as an intellectual equal. “I thought you wanted to go on as you are.”

It struck me that at this he just faintly colored. He gave, at any rate, like a convalescent slightly fatigued, a languid shake of his head. “I don’t — I don’t. I want to get away.”

“You’re tired of Bly?”

“Oh, no, I like Bly.”

“Well, then — ?”

“Oh, *you* know what a boy wants!”

I felt that I didn’t know so well as Miles, and I took temporary refuge. “You want to go to your uncle?”

Again, at this, with his sweet ironic face, he made a movement on the pillow. “Ah, you can’t get off with that!”

I was silent a little, and it was I, now, I think, who changed color. “My dear, I don’t want to get off!”

“You can’t, even if you do. You can’t, you can’t!” — he lay beautifully staring. “My uncle must come down, and you must completely settle things.”

“If we do,” I returned with some spirit, “you may be sure it will be to take you quite away.”

“Well, don’t you understand that that’s exactly what I’m working for? You’ll have to tell him — about the way you’ve let it all drop: you’ll have to tell him a tremendous lot!”

The exultation with which he uttered this helped me somehow, for the instant, to meet him rather more. “And how much will *you*, Miles, have to tell him? There are things he’ll ask you!”

He turned it over. “Very likely. But what things?”

“The things you’ve never told me. To make up his mind what to do with you. He can’t send you back — ”

“Oh, I don’t want to go back!” he broke in. “I want a new field.”

He said it with admirable serenity, with positive unimpeachable gaiety; and doubtless it was that very note that most evoked for me the poignancy, the unnatural childish tragedy, of his probable reappearance at the end of three months with all this bravado and still more dishonor. It overwhelmed me now that I should never be able to bear that, and it made me let myself go. I threw myself upon him and in the tenderness of my pity I embraced him. “Dear little Miles, dear little Miles — !”

My face was close to his, and he let me kiss him, simply taking it with indulgent good humor. “Well, old lady?”

“Is there nothing — nothing at all that you want to tell me?”

He turned off a little, facing round toward the wall and holding up his hand to look at as one had seen sick children look. “I’ve told you — I told you this morning.”

Oh, I was sorry for him! “That you just want me not to worry you?”

He looked round at me now, as if in recognition of my understanding him; then ever so gently, “To let me alone,” he replied.

There was even a singular little dignity in it, something that made me release him, yet, when I had

slowly risen, linger beside him. God knows I never wished to harass him, but I felt that merely, at this, to turn my back on him was to abandon or, to put it more truly, to lose him "I've just begun a letter to your uncle," I said.

"Well, then, finish it!"

I waited a minute. "What happened before?"

He gazed up at me again. "Before what?"

"Before you came back. And before you went away "

For some time he was silent, but he continued to meet my eyes. "What happened?"

It made me, the sound of the words, in which it seemed to me that I caught for the very first time a small faint quaver of consenting consciousness — it made me drop on my knees beside the bed and seize once more the chance of possessing him. "Dear little Miles, dear little Miles, if you *knew* how I want to help you! It's only that, it's nothing but that, and I'd rather die than give you a pain or do you a wrong — I'd rather die than hurt a hair of you. Dear little Miles" — oh, I brought it out now even if I *should* go too far — "I just want you to help me to save you!" But I knew in a moment after this that I had gone too far. The answer to my appeal was instantaneous, but it came in the form of an extraordinary blast and chill, a gust of frozen air, and a shake of the room as great as if, in the wild wind, the casement had crashed in. The boy gave a loud, high shriek, which, lost in the rest of the shock of sound, might have seemed, indistinctly, though I was so close to him, a note either of jubilation or of terror. I jumped to my feet again and was conscious of darkness. So for a moment we remained, while I stared about me and saw mat the drawn curtains were unstirred and the window tight. "Why, the candle's out!" I then cried.

"It was I who blew it, dear!" said Miles.

51.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 18

Henry James

The next day, after lessons, Mrs. Grose found a moment to say to me quietly: "Have you written, miss?"

"Yes — I've written." But I didn't add — for the hour — that my letter, sealed and directed, was still in my pocket. There would be time enough to send it before the messenger should go to the village. Meanwhile there had been, on the part of my pupils, no more brilliant, more exemplary morning. It was exactly as if they had both had at heart to gloss over any recent little friction. They performed the dizziest feats of arithmetic, soaring quite out of *my* feeble range, and perpetrated, in higher spirits than ever, geographical and historical jokes. It was conspicuous of course in Miles in particular that he appeared to wish to show how easily he could let me down. This child, to my memory, really lives in a setting of beauty and misery that no words can translate; there was a distinction all his own in every impulse he revealed; never was a small natural creature, to the uninitiated eye all frankness and freedom, a more ingenious, a more extraordinary little gentleman. I had perpetually to guard against the wonder of contemplation into which my initiated view betrayed me; to check the irrelevant gaze and discouraged sigh in which I constantly both attacked and renounced the enigma of what such a little gentleman could have done that deserved a penalty. Say that, by the dark prodigy I knew, the imagination of all evil *had* been opened up to him: all the justice within me ached for the proof that it could ever have flowered into an act.

He had never, at any rate, been such a little gentleman as when, after our early dinner on this dreadful day, he came round to me and asked if I shouldn't like him, for half an hour, to play to me. David playing to Saul[1] could never have shown a finer sense of the occasion. It was literally a charming exhibition of tact, of magnanimity, and quite tantamount to his saying outright: "The true knights we love to read about never push an advantage too far. I know what you mean now: you mean that — to be let alone yourself and not followed up — you'll cease to worry and spy upon me, won't keep me so close to you, will let me go and come. Well, I 'come,' you see — but I don't go! There'll be plenty of time for that. I do really delight in your society, and I only want to show you that I contended for a principle." It may be imagined whether I resisted this appeal or failed to accompany him again, hand in hand, to the schoolroom. He sat down at the old piano and played as he had never played; and if there are those who think he had better have been kicking a football I can only say that I wholly agree with them. For at the end of a time that under his influence I had quite ceased to measure, I started up with a strange sense of having literally slept at my post. It was after luncheon, and by the schoolroom fire, and yet I hadn't really, in the least, slept: I had only done something much worse — I had forgotten. Where, all this time, was Flora? When I put the question to Miles, he played on a minute before answering and then could only say: "Why, my dear, how do *I* know?" — breaking moreover into a happy laugh which, immediately after, as if it were a vocal accompaniment, he prolonged into incoherent, extravagant song.

I went straight to my room, but his sister was not there; then, before going downstairs, I looked into several others. As she was nowhere about she would surely be with Mrs. Grose, whom, in the comfort

1. See 1 Samuel 16:23. "And whenever the evil spirit...was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand; so Saul...was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."

of that theory, I accordingly proceeded in quest of. I found her where I had found her the evening before, but she met my quick challenge with blank, scared ignorance. She had only supposed that, after the repast, I had carried off both the children; as to which she was quite in her right, for it was the very first time I had allowed the little girl out of my sight without some special provision. Of course now indeed she might be with the maids, so that the immediate thing was to look for her without an air of alarm. This we promptly arranged between us; but when, ten minutes later and in pursuance of our arrangement, we met in the hall, it was only to report on either side that after guarded inquiries we had altogether failed to trace her. For a minute there, apart from observation, we exchanged mute alarms, and I could feel with what high interest my friend returned me all those I had from the first given her.

"She'll be above," she presently said — "in one of the rooms you haven't searched."

"No; she's at a distance." I had made up my mind. "She has gone out."

Mrs. Grose stared. "Without a hat?"

I naturally also looked volumes. "Isn't that woman always without one?"

"She's with *her?*"

"She's with *her!*" I declared. "We must find them."

My hand was on my friend's arm, but she failed for the moment, confronted with such an account of the matter, to respond to my pressure. She communed, on the contrary, on the spot, with her uneasiness. "And where's Master Miles?"

"Oh, *he's* with Quint. They're in the schoolroom."

"Lord, miss!" My view, I was myself aware — and therefore I suppose my tone — had never yet reached so calm an assurance.

"The trick's played," I went on; "they've successfully worked their plan. He found the most divine little way to keep me quiet while she went off."

"'Divine'?" Mrs. Grose bewilderedly echoed.

"Infernal, then!" I almost cheerfully rejoined. "He has provided for himself as well. But come!"

She had helplessly gloomed at the upper regions. "You leave him — ?"

"So long with Quint? Yes — I don't mind that now."

She always ended, at these moments, by getting possession of my hand, and in this manner she could at present still stay me. But after gasping an instant at my sudden resignation, "Because of your letter?" she eagerly brought out.

I quickly, by way of answer, felt for my letter, drew it forth, held it up, and then, freeing myself, went and laid it on the great hall table. "Luke will take it," I said as I carne back. I reached the house door and opened it; I was already on the steps.

My companion still demurred: the storm of the night and the early morning had dropped, but the afternoon was damp and gray. I came down to the drive while she stood in the doorway. "You go with nothing on?"

"What do I care when the child has nothing? I can't wait to dress," I cried, "and if you must do so, I leave you. Try meanwhile, yourself, upstairs."

"With *them?*" Oh, on this, the poor woman promptly joined me!

52.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 19

Henry James

We went straight to the lake, as it was called at Bly, and I daresay rightly called, though I reflect that it may in fact have been a sheet of water less remarkable than it appeared to my untraveled eyes. My acquaintance with sheets of water was small, and the pool of Bly, at all events on the few occasions of my consenting, under the protection of my pupils, to affront its surface in the old flat-bottomed boat moored there for our use, had impressed me both with its extent and its agitation. The usual place of embarkation was half a mile from the house, but I had an intimate conviction that, wherever Flora might be, she was not near home. She had not given me the slip for any small adventure, and, since the day of the very great one that I had shared with her by the pond, I had been aware, in our walks, of the quarter to which she most inclined. This was why I had now given to Mrs. Grose's steps so marked a direction — a direction that made her, when she perceived it, oppose a resistance that showed me she was freshly mystified. "You're going to the water, Miss?. — you think she's in — ?"

"She may be, though the depth is, I believe, nowhere very great. But what I judge most likely is that she's on the spot from which, the other day, we saw together what I told you."

"When she pretended not to see — ?"

"With that astounding self-possession? I've always been sure she wanted to go back alone. And now her brother has managed it for her."

Mrs. Grose still stood where she had stopped. "You suppose they really *talk* of them?"

I could meet this with a confidence! "They say things that, if we heard them, would simply appal us."

"And if she *is* there — ?"

"Yes?"

"Then Miss Jessel is?"

"Beyond a doubt. You shall see."

"Oh, thank you!" my friend cried, planted so firm that, taking it in, I went straight on without her. By the time I reached the pool, however, — she was close behind me, and I knew that, whatever, to her apprehension, might befall me, the exposure of my society struck her as her least danger. She exhaled a moan of relief as we at last came in sight of the greater part of the water without a sight of the child. There was no trace of Flora on that nearer side of the bank where my observation of her had been most startling, and none on the opposite edge, where, save for a margin of some twenty yards, a thick copse came down to the water. The pond, oblong in shape, had a width so scant compared to its length that, with its ends out of view, it might have been taken for a scant river. We looked at the empty expanse, and then I felt the suggestion of my friend's eyes. I knew what she meant and I replied with a negative headshake.

"No, no; wait! She has taken the boat."

My companion stared at the vacant mooring place and then again across the lake. "Then where is it?"

"Our not seeing it is the strongest of proofs. She has used it to go over, and then has managed to hide it."

"All alone — that child?"

“She’s not alone, and at such times she’s not a child: she’s an old, old woman.” I scanned all the visible shore while Mrs. Grose took again, into the queer element I offered her, one of her plunges of submission; then I pointed out that the boat might perfectly be in a small refuge formed by one of the recesses of the pool, an indentation masked, for the hither side, by a projection of the bank and by a clump of trees growing close to the water.

“But if the boat’s there, where on earth’s *she?*” my colleague anxiously asked.

“That’s exactly what we must learn.” And I started to walk further.

“By going all the way round?”

“Certainly, far as it is. It will take us but ten minutes, but it’s far enough to have made the child prefer not to walk. She went straight over.”

“Laws!” cried my friend again; the chain of my logic was ever too much for her. It dragged her at my heels even now, and when we had got halfway round — a devious, tiresome process, on ground much broken and by a path choked with overgrowth — I paused to give her breath. I sustained her with a grateful arm, assuring her that she might hugely help me; and this started us afresh, so that in the course of but few minutes more we reached a point from which we found the boat to be where I had supposed it. It had been intentionally left as much as possible out of sight and was tied to one of the stakes of a fence that came, just there, down to the brink and that had been an assistance to disembarking. I recognized, as I looked at the pair of short, thick oars, quite safely drawn up, the prodigious character of the feat for a little girl; but I had lived, by this time, too long among wonders and had panted to too many livelier measures. There was a gate in the fence, through which we passed, and that brought us, after a trifling interval, more into the open. Then, “There she is!” we both exclaimed at once.

Flora, a short way off, stood before us on the grass and smiled as if her performance was now complete. The next thing she did, however, was to stoop straight down and pluck — quite as if it were all she was there for — a big, ugly spray of withered fern. I instantly became sure she had just come out of the copse. She waited for us, not herself taking a step, and I was conscious of the rare solemnity with which we presently approached her. She smiled and smiled, and we met; but it was all done in a silence by this time flagrantly ominous. Mrs. Grose was the first to break the spell: she threw herself on her knees and, drawing the child to her breast, clasped in a long embrace the little tender, yielding body. While this dumb convulsion lasted I could only watch it — which I did the more intently when I saw Flora’s face peep at me over our companion’s shoulder. It was serious now — the flicker had left it; but it strengthened the pang with which I at that moment envied Mrs. Grose the simplicity of *her* relation. Still, all this while, nothing more passed between us save that Flora had let her foolish fern again drop to the ground. What she and I had virtually said to each other was that pretexts were useless now. When Mrs. Grose finally got up she kept the child’s hand, so that the two were still before me; and the singular reticence of our communion was even more marked in the frank look she launched me. “I’ll be hanged,” it said, “if *I’ll* speak!”

It was Flora who, gazing all over me in candid wonder, was the first. She was struck with our bareheaded aspect. “Why, where are your things?”

“Where yours are, my dear!” I promptly returned.

She had already got back her gaiety, and appeared to take this as an answer quite sufficient, “And where’s Miles?” she went on.

There was something in the small valor of it that quite finished me: these three words from her were, in a flash like the glitter of a drawn blade, the jostle of the cup that my hand, for weeks and weeks, had held high and full to the brim and that now, even before speaking, I felt overflow in a deluge. “I’ll tell you if you’ll tell *me* — ” I heard myself say, then heard the tremor in which it broke.

“Well, what?”

Mrs. Grose's suspense blazed at me, but it was too late now, and I brought the thing out handsomely. "Where, my pet, is Miss Jessel?"

53.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 20

Henry James

Just as in the churchyard with Miles, the whole thing was upon us. Much as I had made of the fact that this name had never once, between us, been sounded, the quick, smitten glare with which the child's face now received it fairly likened my breach of the silence to the smash of a pane of glass. It added to the interposing cry, as if to stay the blow, that Mrs. Grose, at the same instant, uttered over my violence — the shriek of a creature scared, or rather wounded, which, in turn, within a few seconds, was completed by a gasp of my own. I seized my colleague's arm. "She's there, she's there!"

Miss Jessel stood before us on the opposite bank exactly as she had stood the other time, and I remember, strangely, as the first feeling now produced in me, my thrill of joy at having brought on a proof. She was there, and I was justified; she was there, and I was neither cruel nor mad. She was there for poor scared Mrs. Grose, but she was mere most for Flora; and no moment of my monstrous time was perhaps so extraordinary as that in which I consciously threw out to her — with the sense that, pale and ravenous demon as she was, she would catch and understand it — an inarticulate message of gratitude. She rose erect on the spot my friend and I had lately quitted, and mere was not, in all the long reach of her desire, an inch of her evil that fell short. This first vividness of vision and emotion were things of a few seconds, during which Mrs. Grose's dazed blink across to where I pointed struck me as a sovereign sign that she too at last saw, just as it carried my own eyes precipitately to the child. The revelation then of the manner in which Flora was affected startled me, in truth, far more than it would have done to find her also merely agitated, for direct dismay was of course not what I had expected. Prepared and on her guard as our pursuit had actually made her, she would repress every betrayal; and I was therefore shaken, on the spot, by my first glimpse of the particular one for which I had not allowed. To see her, without a convulsion of her small pink face, not even feign to glance in the direction of the prodigy I announced, but only, instead of that, turn at *me* an expression of hard, still gravity, am expression absolutely new and unprecedented and that appeared to read and accuse and judge me — this was a stroke that somehow converted the little girl herself into the very presence that could make me quail. I quailed even though my certitude that she thoroughly saw was never greater than at that instant, and in the immediate need to defend myself I called it passionately to witness. "She's there, you little unhappy thing — there, there, *there*, and you see her as well as you see me!" I had said shortly before to Mrs. Grose that she was not at these times a child, but an old, old woman, and that description of her could not have been more strikingly confirmed than in the way in which, for all answer to this, she simply showed me, without a concession, an admission, of her eyes, a countenance of deeper and deeper, of indeed suddenly quite fixed, reprobation. I was by this time — if I can put the whole thing at all together — more appalled at what I may properly call her manner than at anything else, though it was simultaneously with this that I became aware of having Mrs. Grose also, and very formidably, to reckon with. My elder companion, the next moment, at any rate, blotted out everything but her own flushed face and her loud, shocked protest, a burst of high disapproval. "What a dreadful turn, to be sure, miss! Where on earth do you see anything?"

I could only grasp her more quickly yet, for even while she spoke the hideous plain presence stood

undimmed and undaunted. It had already lasted a minute, and it lasted while I continued, seizing my colleague, quite thrusting her at it and presenting her to it, to insist with my pointing hand. “You don’t see her exactly as *we* see? — you mean to say you don’t now — *now?* She’s as big as a blazing fire! Only look, dearest woman, *look* — !” She looked, even as I did, and gave me, with her deep groan of negation, repulsion, compassion — the mixture with her pity of her relief at her exemption — a sense, touching to me even then, that she would have backed me up if she could. I might well have needed that, for with this hard blow of the proof that her eyes were hopelessly sealed I felt my own situation horribly crumble, I felt — I saw — my livid predecessor press, from her position, on my defeat, and I was conscious, more than all, of what I should have from this instant to deal with in the astounding little attitude of Flora. Into this attitude Mrs. Grose immediately and violently entered, breaking, even while there pierced through my sense of ruin a prodigious private triumph, into breathless reassurance.

“She isn’t there, little lady, and nobody’s there and you never see nothing, my sweet! How can poor Miss Jessel — when poor Miss Jessel’s dead and buried? *We* know, don’t we, love?” — and she appealed, blundering in, to the child. “It’s all a mere mistake and a worry and a joke — and we’ll go home as fast as we can!”

Our companion, on this, had responded with a strange, quick primness of propriety, and they were again, with Mrs. Grose on her feet, united, as it were, in pained opposition to me. Flora continued to fix me with her small mask of reprobation, and even at that minute I prayed God to forgive me for seeming to see that, as she stood there holding tight to our friend’s dress, her incomparable childish beauty had suddenly failed, had quite vanished. I’ve said it already — she was literally, she was hideously, hard; she had turned common and almost ugly. “I don’t know what you mean. I see nobody. I see nothing. I never *have*. I think you’re cruel. I don’t like you!” Then, after this deliverance, which might have been that of a vulgarly pert little girl in the street, she hugged Mrs. Grose more closely and buried in her skirts the dreadful little face. In this position she produced an almost furious wail. “Take me away, take me away — oh, take me away from *her!*”

“From *me?*” I panted.

“From you — from you!” she cried.

Even Mrs. Grose looked across at me dismayed, while I had nothing to do but communicate again with the figure that, on the opposite bank, without a movement, as rigidly still as if catching, beyond the interval, our voices, was as vividly there for my disaster as it was not there for my service. The wretched child had spoken exactly as if she had got from some outside source each of her stabbing little words, and I could therefore, in the full despair of all I had to accept, but sadly shake my head at her. “If I had ever doubted, all my doubt would at present have gone. I’ve been living with the miserable truth, and now it has only too much closed round me. Of course I’ve lost you: I’ve interfered, and you’ve seen — under *her* dictation” — with which I faced, over the pool again, our infernal witness — “the easy and perfect way to meet it. I’ve done my best, but I’ve lost you. Goodbye.” For Mrs. Grose I had am imperative, am almost frantic “Go, go!” before which, in infinite distress, but mutely possessed of the little girl and clearly convinced, in spite of her blindness, that something awful had occurred and some collapse engulfed us, she retreated, by the way we had come, as fast as she could move.

Of what first happened when I was left alone I had no subsequent memory. I only knew that at the end of, I suppose, a quarter of an hour, an odorous dampness and roughness, chilling and piercing my trouble, had made me understand that I must have thrown myself, on my face, on the ground and given way to a wildness of grief. I must have lain there long and cried and sobbed, for when I raised my head the day was almost done. I got up and looked a moment, through the twilight, at the gray pool and its blank, haunted edge, and then I took, back to the house, my dreary and difficult course. When I reached the gate in the fence the boat, to my surprise, was gone, so that I had a fresh reflection to make on Flora’s extraordinary command of the situation. She passed that night, by the most tacit, and I should add, were

not the word so grotesque a false note, the happiest of arrangements, with Mrs. Grose. I saw neither of them on my return, but, on the other hand, as by an ambiguous compensation, I saw a great deal of Miles. I saw — I can use no other phrase — so much of him that it was as if it were more than it had ever been. No evening I had passed at Bly had the portentous quality of this one; in spite of which — and in spite also of the deeper depths of consternation that had opened beneath my feet — there was literally, in the ebbing actual, an extraordinarily sweet sadness. On reaching the house I had never so much as looked for the boy; I had simply gone straight to my room to change what I was wearing and to take in, at a glance, much material testimony to Flora's rupture. Her little belongings had all been removed. When later, by the schoolroom fire, I was served with tea by the usual maid, I indulged, on the article of my other pupil, in no inquiry whatever. He had his freedom now — he might have it to the end! Well, he did have it; and it consisted — in part at least — of his coming in at about eight o'clock and sitting down with me in silence. On the removal of the tea things I had blown out the candles and drawn my chair closer: I was conscious of a mortal coldness and felt as if I should never again be warm. So, when he appeared, I was sitting in the glow with my thoughts. He paused a moment by the door as if to look at me; then — as if to share them came to the other side of the hearth and sank into a chair. We sat there in absolute stillness, yet he wanted, I felt, to be with me.

54.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 21

Henry James

Before a new day, in my room, had fully broken, my eyes opened to Mrs. Grose, who had come to my bedside with worse news. Flora was so markedly feverish that an illess was perhaps at hand; she had passed a night of extreme unrest, a night agitated above all by fears that had for their subject not in the least her former, but wholly her present, governess. It was not against the possible re-entrance of Miss Jessel on the scene that she protested — it was conspicuously and passionately against mine. I was promptly on my feet of course, and with an immense deal to ask; the more that my friend had discernibly now girded her loins to meet me once more. This I felt as soon as I had put to her the question of her sense of the child's sincerity as against my own. "She persists in denying to you that she saw, or has ever seen, anything?"

My visitor's trouble, truly, was great. "Ah, miss, it isn't a matter on which I can push her! Yet it isn't either, I must say, as if I much needed to. It has made her, every inch of her, quite old."

"Oh, I see her perfectly from here. She resents, for all the world like some high little personage, the imputation on her truthfulness and, as it were, her respectability. 'Miss Jessel indeed — *she!*' Ah, she's 'respectable,' the chit! The impression she gave me there yesterday was, I assure you, the very strangest of all; it was quite beyond any of the others. I *did* put my foot in it! She'll never speak to me again."

Hideous and obscure as it all was, it held Mrs. Grose briefly silent; then she granted my point with a frankness which, I made sure, had more behind it. "I think indeed, miss, she never will. She do have a grand manner about it!

"And that manner" — I summed it up — "is practically what's the matter with her now!"

Oh, that manner, I could see in my visitor's face, and not a little else besides! "She asks me every three minutes if I think you're coming in."

"I see — I see." I, too, on my side, had so much more than worked it out. "Has she said to you since yesterday — except to repudiate her familiarity with anything so dreadful — a single other word about Miss Jessel?"

"Not one, miss. And of course you know," my friend added, "I took it from her, by the lake, that, just then and there at least, there *was* nobody."

"Rather! And, naturally, you take it from her still."

"I don't contradict her. What else can I do?"

"Nothing in the world! You've the cleverest little person to deal with. They've made them — their two friends, I mean — still cleverer even than nature did; for it was wondrous material to play on! Flora has now her grievance, and she'll work it to the end."

"Yes, miss; but to *what* end?"

"Why, that of dealing with me to her uncle. She'll make me out to him the lowest creature — !"

I winced at the fair show of the scene in Mrs. Grose's face; she looked for a minute as if she sharply saw them together. "And him who thinks so well of you!"

"He has an odd way — it comes over me now," I laughed, " — of proving it! But that doesn't matter. What Flora wants, of course, is to get rid of me."

My companion bravely concurred. “Never again to so much as look at you.”

“So that what you’ve come to me now for,” I asked, “is to speed me on my way?” Before she had time to reply, however, I had her in check. “I’ve a better idea — the result of my reflections. My going *would* seem the right thing, and on Sunday I was terribly near it. Yet that won’t do. It’s you who must go. You must take Flora.”

My visitor, at this, did speculate. “But where in the world — ?”

“Away from here. Away from *them.* Away, even most of all, now, from me. Straight to her uncle.”

“Only to tell on you — ?”

“No, not ‘only’! To leave me, in addition, with my remedy.”

She was still vague. “And what *is* your remedy?”

“Your loyalty, to begin with. And then Miles’s.”

She looked at me hard. “Do you think he — ?”

“Won’t, if he has the chance, turn on me? Yes, I venture still to think it. At all events, I want to try. Get off with his sister as soon as possible and leave me with him alone.” I was amazed, myself, at the spirit I had still in reserve, and therefore perhaps a trifle the more disconcerted at the way in which, in spite of this fine example of it, she hesitated. “There’s one thing, of course,” I went on: “they mustn’t, before she goes, see each other for three seconds.” Then it came over me that, in spite of Flora s presumable sequestration from the instant of her return from the pool, it might already be too late. “Do you mean,” I anxiously asked, “that they *have* met?”

At this she quite flushed. “Ah, miss, I’m not such a fool as that! If I’ve been obliged to leave her three or four times, it has been each time with one of the maids, and at present, though she’s alone, she’s locked in safe. And yet — and yet!” There were too many things.

“And yet what?”

“Well, are you so sure of the little gentleman?”

“I’m not sure of anything but *you.* But I have, since last evening, a new hope. I think he wants to give me an opening. I do believe that — poor little exquisite wretch! — he wants to speak. Last evening, in the firelight and the silence, he sat with me for two hours as if it were just coming.”

Mrs. Grose looked hard, through the window, at the gray, gathering day. “And did it come?”

“No, though I waited and waited, I confess it didn’t, and it was without a breach of the silence or so much as a faint allusion to his sister’s condition and absence that we at last kissed for good night. All the same,” I continued, “I can’t, if her uncle sees her, consent to his seeing her brother without my having given the boy — and most of all because things have got so bad — a little more time.”

My friend appeared on this ground more reluctant than I could quite understand. “What do you mean by more time?”

“Well, a day or two — really to bring it out. He’ll then be on *my* side — of which you see the importance. If nothing comes, I shall only fail, and you will, at the worst, have helped me by doing, on your arrival in town, whatever yon may have found possible.” So I put it before her, but she continued for a little so inscrutably embarrassed that I came again to her aid. “Unless, indeed,” I wound up, “you really want *not* to go.”

I could see it, in her face, at last clear itself; she put out her hand to me as a pledge. “I’ll go — I’ll go. I’ll go this morning.”

I wanted to be very just. “If you *should* wish still to wait, I would engage she shouldn’t see me.”

“No, no: it’s the place itself. She must leave it.” She held me a moment with heavy eyes, then brought out the rest. “Your idea’s the right one. I myself, miss — ”

“Well?”

“I can’t stay.”

The look she gave me with it made me jump at possibilities. “You mean that, since yesterday, you *have* seen — ?”

She shook her head with dignity. “I’ve *heard* — !”

“Heard?”

“From that child — horrors! There!” she sighed with tragic relief. “On my honor, miss, she says things — !” But at this evocation she broke down; she dropped, with a sudden sob, upon my sofa and, as I had seen her do before, gave way to all the grief of it.

It was quite in another manner that I, for my part, let myself go. “Oh, thank God!”

She sprang up again at this, drying her eyes with a groan. “‘Thank God’?”

“It so justifies me!”

“It does that, miss!”

I couldn’t have desired more emphasis, but I just hesitated. “She’s so horrible?”

I saw my colleague scarce knew how to put it. “Really shocking.”

“And about me?”

“About you, miss — since you must have it. It’s beyond everything, for a young lady; and I can’t think wherever she must have picked up — ”

“The appalling language she applied to me? I can, then!” I broke in with a laugh that was doubtless significant enough.

It only, in truth, left my friend still more grave. “Well, perhaps I ought to also — since I’ve heard some of it before! Yet I can’t bear it,” the poor woman went on while, with the same movement, she glanced, on my dressing table, at the face of my watch. “But I must go back.”

I kept her, however. “Ah, if you can’t bear it — !”

“How can I stop with her, you mean? Why, just *for* that: to get her away. Far from this,” she pursued, “far from them — ”

“She may be different? She may be free?” I seized her almost with joy. “Then, in spite of yesterday, you *believe* — ”

“In such doings?” Her simple description of them required, in the light of her expression, to be carried no further, and she gave me the whole thing as she had never done. “I believe.”

Yes, it was a joy, and we were still shoulder to shoulder: if I might continue sure of that I should care but little what else happened. My support in the presence of disaster would be the same as it had been in my early need of confidence, and if my friend would answer for my honesty, I would answer for all the rest. On the point of taking leave of her, nonetheless, I was to some extent embarrassed. “There’s one thing, of course — it occurs to me — to remember. My letter, giving the alarm, will have reached town before you.”

I now perceived still more how she had been beating about the bush and how weary at last it had made her. “Your letter won’t have got there. Your letter never went.”

“What then became of it?”

“Goodness knows! Master Miles — ”

“Do you mean he took it?” I gasped.

She hung fire, but she overcame her reluctance. “I mean that I saw yesterday, when I came back with Miss Flora, that it wasn’t where you had put it. Later in the evening I had the chance to question Luke, and he declared that he had neither noticed nor touched it.” We could only exchange, on this, one of our deeper mutual soundings, and it was Mrs. Grose who first brought up the plumb with an almost elated “You see!”

“Yes, I see that if Miles took it instead he probably will have read it and destroyed it.”

“And don’t you see anything else?”

I faced her a moment with a sad smile. “It strikes me that by this time your eyes are open even wider than mine.”

They proved to be so indeed, but she could still blush, almost, to show it. “I make out now what he must have done at school.” And she gave, in her simple sharpness, an almost droll disillusioned nod. “He stole!”

I turned it over — I tried to be more judicial. “Well — perhaps.”

She looked as if she found me unexpectedly calm. “He stole *letters*!”

She couldn’t know my reasons for a calmness after all pretty shallow; so I showed them off as I might. “I hope then it was to more purpose than in this case! The note, at any rate, that I put on me table yesterday,” I pursued, “will have given him so scant an advantage — for it contained only the bare demand for an interview — that he is already much ashamed of having gone so far for so little, and that what he had on his mind last evening was precisely the need of confession.” I seemed to myself, for me instant, to have mastered it, to see it all. “Leave us, leave us” — I was already, at the door, hurrying her off. “I’ll get it out of him. He’ll meet me — he’ll confess. If he confesses, he’s saved. And if he’s saved — ”

“Then *you* are?” The dear woman kissed me on this, and I took her farewell. “I’ll save you without him!” she cried as she went.

55.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 22

Henry James

Yet it was when she had got off — and I missed her on the spot — that the great pinch really came. If I had counted on what it would give me to find myself alone with Miles, I speedily perceived, at least, that it would give me a measure. No hour of my stay in fact was so assailed with apprehensions as that of my coming down to learn that the carriage containing Mrs. Grose and my younger pupil had already rolled out of the gates. Now I *was,* I said to myself, face to face with the elements, and for much of the rest of the day, while I fought my weakness, I could consider that I had been supremely rash. It was a tighter place still than I had yet turned round in; all the more that, for the first time, I could see in the aspect of others a confused reflection of the crisis. What had happened naturally caused them all to stare; there was too little of the explained, throw out whatever we might, in the suddenness of my colleague's act. The maids and the men looked blank; the effect of which on my nerves was an aggravation until I saw the necessity of making it a positive aid. It was precisely, in short, by just clutching the helm that I avoided total wreck; and I dare say that, to bear up at all, I became, that morning, very grand and very dry. I welcomed the consciousness that I was charged with much to do, and I caused it to be known as well that, left thus to myself, I was quite remarkably firm. I wandered with that manner, for the next hour or two, all over the place and looked, I have no doubt, as if I were ready for any onset. So, for the benefit of whom it might concern, I paraded with a sick heart.

The person it appeared least to concern proved to be, till dinner, little Miles himself. My perambulations had given me, meanwhile, no glimpse of him, but they had tended to make more public the change taking place in our relation as a consequence of his having at the piano the day before, kept me, in Flora's interest, so beguiled and befooled. The stamp of publicity had of course been fully given by her confinement and departure, and the change itself was now ushered in by our nonobservance of the regular custom of the schoolroom. He had already disappeared when, on my way down, I pushed open his door, and I learned below that he had breakfasted — in the presence of a couple of the maids — with Mrs. Grose and his sister. He had then gone out, as he said, for a stroll than which nothing, I reflected, could better have expressed his frank view of the abrupt transformation of my office. What he would now permit this office to consist of was yet to be settled: there was a queer relief, at all events — I mean for myself in especial — in the renouncement of one pretension. If so much had sprung to the surface, I scarce put it too strongly in saying that what had perhaps sprung highest was the absurdity of our prolonging the fiction that I had anything more to teach him. It sufficiently stuck out that, by tacit little tricks in which even more than myself he carried out the care for my dignity, I had had to appeal to him to let me off straining to meet him on the ground of his true capacity.

He had at any rate his freedom now; I was never to touch it again; as I had amply shown, moreover, when, on his joining me in the schoolroom the previous night, I had uttered, on the subject of the interval just concluded, neither challenge nor hint. I had too much, from this moment, my other ideas. Yet when he at last arrived, the difficulty of applying them, the accumulations of my problem, were brought straight home to me by the beautiful little presence on which what had occurred had as yet, for the eye, dropped neither stain nor shadow.

To mark, for the house, the high state I cultivated I decreed that my meals with the boy should be served, as we called it, downstairs; so that I had been awaiting him in the ponderous pomp of the room outside of the window of which I had had from Mrs. Grose, that first scared Sunday, my flash of something it would scarce have done to call light. Here at present I felt afresh — for I had felt it again and again — how my equilibrium depended on the success of my rigid will, the will to shut my eyes as tight as possible to the truth that what I had to deal with was, revoltingly, against nature. I could only get on at all by taking "nature" into my confidence and my account, by treating my monstrous ordeal as a push in a direction unusual, of course, and unpleasant, but demanding, after all, for a fair front, only another turn of the screw of ordinary human virtue. No attempt, nonetheless, could well require more tact than just this attempt to supply, one's self, *all* the nature. How could I put even a little of that article into a suppression of reference to what had occurred? How, on the other hand, could I make reference without a new plunge into the hideous obscure? Well, a sort of answer, after a time, had come to me, and it was so far confirmed as that I was met, incontestably, by the quickened vision of what was rare in my little companion. It was indeed as if he had found even now — as he had so often found at lessons — still some other delicate way to ease me off. Wasn't there light in the fact which, as we shared our solitude, broke out with a specious glitter it had never yet quite worn? — the fact that (opportunity aiding, precious opportunity which had now come) it would be preposterous, with a child so endowed, to forego the help one might wrest from absolute intelligence? What had his intelligence been given him for but to save him? Mightn't one, to reach his mind, risk the stretch of an angular arm over his character? It was as if, when we were face to face in the dining room, he had literally shown me the way, The roast mutton was on the table, and I had dispensed with attendance. Miles, before he sat down, stood a moment with his hands in his pockets and looked at the joint, on which he seemed on the point of passing some humorous judgment. But what he presently produced was: "I say, my dear, is she really very awfully ill?"

"Little Flora? Not so bad but that she'll presently be better. London will set her up. Bly had ceased to agree with her. Come here and take your mutton.

He alertly obeyed me, carried the plate carefully to ms seat, and, when he was established, went on. Did Bly disagree with her so terribly suddenly?

"Not so suddenly as you might think. One had seen it coming on."

"Then why didn't you get her off before?"

"Before what?"

"Before she became too ill to travel."

I found myself prompt. "She's *not* too ill to travel: she only might have become so if she had stayed. This was just the moment to seize. The journey will dissipate the influence" — oh, I was grand! — "and carry it off."

"I see, I see" — Miles, for that matter, was grand, too. He settled to his repast with the charming little "table manner" that, from the day of his arrival, had relieved me of all grossness of admonition. Whatever he had been driven from school for, it was not for ugly feeding. He was irreproachable, as always, today; but he was unmistakably more conscious. He was discernibly trying to take for granted more things than he found, without assistance, quite easy; and he dropped into peaceful silence while he felt his situation. Our meal was of the briefest — mine a vain pretense, and I had the things immediately removed. While this was done Miles stood again with his hands in his little pockets and his back to me — stood and looked out of the wide window through which, that other day, I had seen what pulled me up. We continued silent while the maid was with us — as silent, it whimsically occurred to me, as some young couple who, on their wedding journey, at the inn, feel shy in the presence of the waiter. He turned round only when the waiter had left us. "Well — so we're alone!"

56.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 23

Henry James

“Oh, more or less.” I fancy my smile was pale. “Not absolutely. We shouldn’t like that!” I went on.

“No — I suppose we shouldn’t. Of course we have the others.”

“We have the others — we have indeed the others,” I concurred.

“Yet even though we have them,” he returned, still with his hands in his pockets and planted there in front of me, “they don’t much count, do they?”

I made the best of it, but I felt wan. “It depends on what you call ‘much!’.”

“Yes” — with all accommodation — “everything depends!” On this, however, he faced to the window again and presently reached it with his vague, restless, cogitating step. He remained there awhile, with his forehead against the glass, in contemplation of the stupid shrubs I knew and the dull things of November. I had always my hypocrisy of “work,” behind which, now, I gained the sofa. Steadying myself with it there as I had repeatedly done at those moments of torment that I have described as the moments of my knowing me children to be given to something from which I was barred, I sufficiently obeyed my habit of being prepared for the worst. But an extraordinary impression dropped on me as I extracted a meaning from the boy’s embarrassed back — none other than the impression that I was not barred now. This influence grew in a few minutes to sharp intensity and seemed bound up with the direct perception that it was positively he who was. The frames and squares of the great window were a kind of image, for him, of a kind of failure. I felt that I saw him, at any rate, shut in or shut out. He was admirable, but not comfortable: I took it in with a throb of hope. Wasn’t he looking, through the haunted pane, for something he couldn’t see? — and wasn’t it the first time in the whole business that he had known such a lapse? The first, the very first: I found it a splendid portent. It made him anxious, though he watched himself; he had been anxious all day and, even while in his usual sweet little manner he sat at table, had needed all his small strange genius to give it a gloss. When he at last turned round to meet me, it was almost as if this genius had succumbed. “Well, I think I’m glad Bly agrees with *me!*”

“You would certainly seem to have seen, these twenty-four hours, a good deal more of it than for some time before. I hope,” I went on bravely, “that you’ve been enjoying yourself.”

“Oh, yes, I’ve been ever so far; all round about — miles and miles away. I’ve never been so free.”

He had really a manner of his own, and I could only try to keep up with him. “Well, do you like it?”

He stood there smiling; then at last he put into two words — “Do *you?*” — more discrimination than I had ever heard two words contain. Before I had time to deal with that, however, he continued as if with the sense that this was an impertinence to be softened. “Nothing could be more charming than the way you take it, for of course if we’re alone together now it’s you that are alone most. But I hope,” he threw in, “yon don’t particularly mind!”

“Having to do with you?” I asked. “My dear child, how can I help minding? Though I’ve renounced all claim to your company — you’re so beyond me — I at least greatly enjoy it. What else should I stay on for?”

He looked at me more directly, and the expression of his face, graver now, struck me as the most beautiful I had ever found in it. “You stay on just for *that?*”

"Certainly. I stay on as your friend and from the tremendous interest I take in you till something can be done for you that may be more worth your while. That needn't surprise you." My voice trembled so that I felt it impossible to suppress the shake. "Don't you remember how I told you, when I came and sat on your bed the night of the storm, that there was nothing in the world I wouldn't do for you?"

"Yes, yes!" He, on his side, more and more visibly nervous, had a tone to master; but he was so much more successful than I that, laughing out through his gravity, he could pretend we were pleasantly jesting. "Only that, I think, was to get me to do something for *you!*"

"It was partly to get you to do something," I conceded. "But you know, you didn't do it."

"Oh, yes," he said with the brightest superficial eagerness, "you wanted me to tell you something."

"That's it. Out, straight out. What you have on your mind, you know."

"Ah, then, is *that* what you've stayed over for?"

He spoke with a gaiety through which I could still catch the finest little quiver of resentful passion; but I can't begin to express the effect upon me of an implication of surrender even so faint. It was as if what I had yearned for had come at last only to astonish me. "Well, yes — I may as well make a clean breast of it. It was precisely for that."

He waited so long that I supposed it for the purpose of repudiating the assumption on which my action had been founded; but what he finally said was: "Do you mean now — here?"

"There couldn't be a better place or time." He looked round him uneasily, and I had the rare — oh, the queer — impression of the very first symptom I had seen in him of the approach of immediate fear. It was as if he were suddenly afraid of me — which struck me indeed as perhaps the best thing to make him. Yet in the very pang of the effort I felt it vain to try sternness, and I heard myself the next instant so gentle as to be almost grotesque "You want so to go out again?"

"Awfully!" He smiled at me heroically, and the touching little bravery of it was enhanced by his actually flushing with pain. He had picked up his hat, which he had brought in, and stood twirling it in a way that gave me, even as I was just nearly reaching port, a perverse horror of what I was doing. To do it in *any* way was an act of violence, for what did it consist of but the obtrusion of the idea of grossness and guilt on a small helpless creature who had been for me a revelation of the possibilities of beautiful intercourse? Wasn't it base to create for a being so exquisite a mere alien awkwardness? I suppose I now read into our situation a clearness it couldn't have had at the time, for I seem to see our poor eyes already lighted with some spark of a prevision of the anguish that was to come. So we circled about, with terrors and scruples, like fighters not daring to close. But it was for each other we feared! That kept us a little longer suspended and unbruised. "I'll tell you everything," Miles said — "I mean I'll tell you anything you like. You'll stay on with me, and we shall both be all right; and I *will* tell you — I *will*. But not now."

"Why not now?"

My insistence turned him from me and kept him once more at his window in a silence during which, between us, you might have heard a pin drop. Then he was before me again with the air of a person for whom, outside, someone who had frankly to be reckoned with was waiting. "I have to see Luke."

I had not yet reduced him to quite so vulgar a lie, and I felt proportionately ashamed. But, horrible as it was, his lies made up my truth. I achieved thoughtfully a few loops of my knitting. "Well, then, go to Luke, and I'll wait for what you promise. Only, in return for that, satisfy, before you leave me, one very much smaller request."

He looked as if he felt he had succeeded enough to be able still a little to bargain. "Very much smaller — ?"

"Yes, a mere fraction of the whole. Tell me" — oh, my work preoccupied me, and I was offhand! — "if, yesterday afternoon, from the table in the hall, you took, you know, my letter."

57.

Turn of the Screw: Chapter 24

Henry James

My sense of how he received this suffered for a minute from something that I can describe only as a fierce split of my attention — a stroke that at first, as I sprang straight up, reduced me to the mere blind movement of getting hold of him, drawing him close, and, while I just fell for support against the nearest piece of furniture, instinctively keeping him with his back to the window. The appearance was full upon us that I had already had to deal with here: Peter Quint had come into view like a sentinel before a prison. The next thing I saw was that, from outside, he had reached the window, and then I knew that, close to the glass and glaring in through it, he offered once more to the room his white face of damnation. It represents but grossly what took place within me at the sight to say that on the second my decision was made; yet I believe that no woman so overwhelmed ever in so short a time recovered her grasp of the *act.* It came to me in the very horror of the immediate presence that the act would be, seeing and facing what I saw and faced, to keep the boy himself unaware. The inspiration — I can call it by no other name — was that I felt how voluntarily, how transcentently, I *might.* It was like fighting with a demon for a human soul, and when I had fairly so appraised it I saw how the human soul — held out, in the tremor of my hands, at arm's length — had a perfect dew of sweat on a lovely childish forehead. The face that was close to mine was as white as the face against the glass, and out of it presently came a sound, not low nor weak, but as if from much further away, that I drank like a waft of fragrance.

"Yes I took it."

At this, with a moan of joy, I enfolded, I drew him close; and while I held him to my breast, where I could feel in the sudden fever of his little body the tremendous pulse of his little heart, I kept my eyes on the thing at the window and saw it move and shift its posture. I have likened it to a sentinel, but its slow wheel, for a moment, was rather the prowl of a baffled beast. My present quickened courage, however, was such that, not too much to let it through, I had to shade, as it were, my flame. Meanwhile the glare of the face was again at the window, the scoundrel fixed as if to watch and wait. It was the very confidence that I might now defy him, as well as the positive certitude, by this time, of the child's unconsciousness, that made me go on, "What did you take it for?"

'To see what you said about me."

"You opened the letter?"

"I opened it."

My eyes were now, as I held him off a little again, on Miles's own face, in which the collapse of mockery showed me how complete was the ravage of uneasiness. What was prodigious was that at last, by my success, his sense was sealed and his communication stopped: he knew that he was in presence, but knew not of what, and knew still less that I also was and that I did know. And what did this strain of trouble matter when my eyes went back to the window only to see that the air was clear again and — by my personal triumph — the influence quenched? There was nothing there. I felt that the cause was mine and that I should surely get *all.* "And you found nothing!" — I let my elation out.

He gave the most mournful, thoughtful little headshake. "Nothing."

"Nothing, nothing!" I almost shouted in my joy.

‘Nothing, nothing,” he sadly repeated.

I kissed his forehead; it was drenched. “So what have you done with it?”

“I’ve burned it.”

“Burned it?” It was now or never. “Is that what you did at school?”

Oh, what this brought up! “At school?”

“Did you take letters? or other things?”

“Other things?” He appeared now to be thinking of something far off and that reached him only through the pressure of his anxiety. Yet it did reach him. “Did I *steal?*”

I felt myself redden to the roots of my hair as well as wonder if it were more strange to put to a gentleman such a question or to see him take it with allowances that gave the very distance of his fall in the world. “Was it for that you mightn’t go back?”

The only thing he felt was rather a dreary little surprise. “Did you know I mightn’t go back?”

“I know everything.”

He gave me at this the longest and strangest look. “Everything?”

“Everything. Therefore *did* you — ?” But I couldn’t say it again.

Miles could, very simply. “No. I didn’t steal.”

My face must have shown him I believed him utterly; yet my hands — but it was for pure tenderness — shook him as if to ask him why, if it was all for nothing, he had condemned me to months of torment. “What then did you do?”

He looked in vague pain all round the top of the room and drew his breath, two or three times over, as if with difficulty. He might have been standing at the bottom of the sea and raising his eyes to some faint green twilight. “Well — I said things.”

“Only that?”

“They thought it was enough!”

“To turn you out for?”

Never, truly, had a person “turned out” shown so little to explain it as this little person! He appeared to weigh my question, but in a manner quite detached and almost helpless. “Well, I suppose I oughtn’t.”

But to whom did you say them?”

He evidently tried to remember, but it dropped — he had lost it. “I don’t know!”

He almost smiled at me in the desolation of his surrender, which was indeed practically, by this time, so complete that I ought to have left it there. But I was infatuated — I was blind with victory, though even then the very effect that was to have brought him so much nearer was already that of added separation. “Was it to everyone?” I asked.

“No; it was only to — ” But he gave a sick little headshake. “I don’t remember their names.”

“Were they then so many?”

“No — only a few. Those I liked.”

Those he liked? I seemed to float not into clearness, but into a darker obscure, and within a minute there had come to me out of my very pity the appalling alarm of his being perhaps innocent. It was for the instant confounding and bottomless, for if he *were* innocent, what then on earth was *I?* Paralyzed, while it lasted, by the mere brush of the question, I let him go a little, so that, with a deep-drawn sigh, he turned away from me again; which, as he faced toward the clear window, I suffered, feeling that I had nothing now there to keep him from. “And did they repeat what you said?” I went on after a moment.

He was soon at some distance from me, still breathing hard and again with the air, though now without anger for it, of being confined against his will. Once more, as he had done before, he looked up at the dim day as if, of what had hitherto sustained him, nothing was left but an unspeakable anxiety. “Oh, yes,” he nevertheless replied — “they must have repeated them. To those *they* liked,” he added.

There was, somehow, less of it than I had expected; but I turned it over. "And these things came round — ?"

"To the masters? Oh, yes!" he answered very simply. "But I didn't know they'd tell."

"The masters? They didn't — they've never told. That's why I ask you."

He turned to me again his little beautiful fevered face. "Yes, it was too bad."

"Too bad?"

"What I suppose I sometimes said. To write home."

I can't name the exquisite pathos of the contradiction given to such a speech by such a speaker; I only know that the next instant I heard myself throw off with homely force: "Stuff and nonsense!" But the next after that I must have sounded stern enough. "What *were* these things?"

My sternness was all for his judge, his executioner; yet it made him avert himself again, and that movement made *me,* with a single bound and an irrepressible cry, spring straight upon him. For there again, against the glass, as if to blight his confession and stay his answer, was the hideous author of our woe — the white face of damnation. I felt a sick swim at the drop of my victory and all the return of my battle, so that the wildness of my veritable leap only served as a great betrayal. I saw him, from the midst of my act, meet it with a divination, and on the perception that even now he only guessed, and that the window was still to his own eyes free, I let the impulse flame up to convert the climax of his dismay into the very proof of his liberation. "No more, no more, no more!" I shrieked, as I tried to press him against me, to my visitant.

"Is she *here?*" Miles panted as he caught with his sealed eyes the direction of my words. Then as his strange "she" staggered me and, with a gasp, I echoed it, "Miss Jessel, Miss Jessel!" he with a sudden fury gave me back.

I seized, stupefied, his supposition some sequel to what we had done to Flora, but this made me only want to show him that it was better still than that. "It's not Miss Jessel! But it's at the window — straight before us. It's *there* — the coward horror, there for the last time!"

At this, after a second in which his head made the movement of a baffled dog's on a scent and then gave a frantic little shake for air and light, he was at me in a white rage, bewildered, glaring vainly over the place and missing wholly, though it now, to my sense, filled the room like the taste of poison, the wide, overwhelming presence. "It's *he?*"

I was so determined to have all my proof that I flashed into ice to challenge him. "Whom do you mean by 'he'?"

"Peter Quint — you devil!" His face gave again, round the room, its convulsed supplication. "*Where?*"

They are in my ears still, his supreme surrender of the name and his tribute to my devotion. "What does he matter now, my own? — what will he *ever* matter? I have you," I launched at the beast, "but he has lost you forever!" Then, for the demonstration of my work, "There, *there!*" I said to Miles.

But he had already jerked straight round, stared, glared again, and seen but the quiet day. With the stroke of the loss I was so proud of he uttered the cry of a creature hurled over an abyss, and the grasp with which I recovered him might have been that of catching him in his fall. I caught him, yes, I held him — it may be imagined with what a passion; but at the end of a minute I began to feel what it truly was that I held. We were alone with the quiet day, and his little heart, dispossessed, had stopped.

58.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

1. List some of the character names you think are symbolic or at least significant because of the connotations/associations of their names.
2. What do you think of the children's uncle? What does the governess think of him?
3. Why do you think Miles was expelled from his school?
4. Did Miles survive to adulthood and become Douglas?
5. What images relating to Peter Quint might be interpreted symbolically or clinically in a Freudian way?
6. Are the children liars?
7. When Flora is seen at the lake, are her playthings symbolic?
8. Does anyone else beside the governess ever admit to seeing the ghosts?
9. What is gained by having the governess relate the story?
10. What are some of the novels the governess alludes to, and what do they have in common?
11. When Miles shouts, "Peter Quint—you devil!", to whom is he speaking?
12. Describe the circumstances surrounding each appearance of an apparition.

Short Essay Topic (750-1000 words)

C.G. Jung theorizes that "neuroses are the results of the person's failure to confront and to accept some archetypal component of the unconscious. Instead of assimilating this unconscious element to their consciousness, neurotic individuals persist in projecting it upon some other person…" (Guerin, et al. *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, 3rd ed., p. 169). Discuss characterization within a framework of Jung's triad of shadow, persona, and anima.

Resources

Appendix 1: Turn of the Screw Mini Casebook. See the three suggested “controlled research topics” in the mini-casebook on *Turn of the Screw* in Appendices.

VIII

Oscar Wilde (1854–1900)

59.

Biography



Figure 1: Oscar Wilde

Biography

Oscar Wilde, the son of an eminent Dublin surgeon, stands out among the fraternity of Victorian dramatists, which includes fellow-Irishman Dion Boucicault (1820–1890), James Robinson Planché (1796–1880), Tom Robertson (1829–1871), Tom Taylor (1817–1880), W.S. Gilbert (1836–1911), and Arthur Wing Pinero (1859–1934). After studying at Trinity College, Dublin, Wilde attended Magdalen College, Oxford, where as a disciple of Walter Pater, he participated in the Aesthetic Movement, which advocated "art for art's sake." His aesthetic idiosyncrasies (such as his wearing his hair long, dressing colourfully, and carrying flowers while lecturing) were parodied by Gilbert and Sullivan in their operetta *Patience* (1881), for which Wilde acted as a "front man" by delivering lectures on aestheticism in advance of the road tour of the operetta.

After his marriage to Constance Lloyd in 1884, Wilde published several children's books, and in 1891 the tale of a hedonistic Adonis with the tormented soul of a satyr, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In a brilliant series of domestic comedies — *Lady Windermere's* Fan (1892), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), and *An Ideal Husband* (1894) — Wilde took the London stage by storm with his witty, epigrammatic style, insolent ease of utterance, and suave urbanity. Wilde described *Lady Windermere's Fan* as "one of those modern drawing-room plays with pink lampshades." Its combination of polished social drama and corruscatingly witty dialogue was repeated in 1895 in the two hits that he had on the London stage simultaneously, *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Later that same year, Wilde's tragic downfall was precipitated by an accusation of homosexuality by the Marquis of Queensbury, father of Wilde's intimate, Lord Alfred Douglas. The irate peer left a card at Wilde's club addressed thus: "To Oscar Wilde posing as a Somdomite" (sic). Wilde, taking it that the writer meant "Sodomite," made the catastrophic error of deciding to sue the peer for libel. After a sensational trial, Wilde was sentenced to two years' hard labour for homosexual practices. Sent to Wandsworth Prison in November 1895, Wilde was subsequently transferred to Reading Gaol (image). Bankrupt and ruined in health, Wilde left prison in 1897 and settled, bitter and broken, in Paris under the pseudonym Sebastian Melmoth (the name of his favourite martyr from *Melmoth the Wanderer*, a novel written by his great-uncle, Charles Maturin, in 1820).

Of his time as a prisoner, he wrote in "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" (1898):

I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Under the little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky.

All that we know who lie in gaol
Is that the wall is strong;
And that each day is like a year,
A year whose days are long.

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60.

The Importance of Being Earnest: Act I

Oscar Wilde

A Trivial Comedy for Serious People

THE PERSONS IN THE PLAY

John Worthing, J.P.[1]
Algernon Moncrieff
Rev. Canon Chasuble, D.D.
Merriman, Butler
Lane, Manservant
Lady[2] Bracknell
Hon[3]. Gwendolen Fairfax
Cecily Cardew
Miss Prism, Governess

THE SCENES OF THE PLAY

ACT I. Algernon Moncrieff's Flat in Half-Moon Street, W.[4]
ACT II. The Garden at the Manor House, Woolton.
ACT III. Drawing-Room at the Manor House, Woolton.
TIME: The Present.

FIRST ACT

SCENE

Morning-room in Algernon's flat in Half-Moon Street. The room is luxuriously and artistically furnished. The sound of a piano is heard in the adjoining room.

[**Lane** is arranging afternoon tea on the table, and after the music has ceased, **Algernon** enters.]

Algernon. Did you hear what I was playing, Lane?

Lane. I didn't think it polite to listen, sir.

Algernon. I'm sorry for that, for your sake. I don't play accurately—any one can play accurately—but I play with wonderful expression. As far as the piano is concerned, sentiment is my forte. I keep science for Life.

Lane. Yes, sir.

1. Justice of the Peace, presumably as with Justice Shallow in 2 Henry IV, a local position based on land ownership and position in the community. Jack's surname alludes to the seaside resort south of London where Wilde wrote the play in the summer of 1894.
2. All daughters of dukes, marquesses, and earls are styled Lady.
3. Honourable. Daughters of barons and viscounts such as Lord Bracknell, were allowed this designation, though never used in direct address.
4. A fashionable street in London's Mayfair district. "W" is an abbreviation for "West," designating postal district.

Algernon. And, speaking of the science of Life, have you got the cucumber sandwiches cut for Lady Bracknell?

Lane. Yes, sir. [Hands them on a salver.]

Algernon. [Inspects them, takes two, and sits down on the sofa.] Oh! . . . by the way, Lane, I see from your book that on Thursday night, when Lord Shoreman and Mr. Worthing were dining with me, eight bottles of champagne are entered as having been consumed.

Lane. Yes, sir; eight bottles and a pint.

Algernon. Why is it that at a bachelor's establishment the servants invariably drink the champagne? I ask merely for information.

Lane. I attribute it to the superior quality of the wine, sir. I have often observed that in married households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand.

Algernon. Good heavens! Is marriage so demoralising as that?

Lane. I believe it *is* a very pleasant state, sir. I have had very little experience of it myself up to the present. I have only been married once. That was in consequence of a misunderstanding between myself and a young person.

Algernon. [Languidly.] I don't know that I am much interested in your family life, Lane.

Lane. No, sir; it is not a very interesting subject. I never think of it myself.

Algernon. Very natural, I am sure. That will do, Lane, thank you.

Lane. Thank you, sir. [**Lane** goes out.]

Algernon. Lane's views on marriage seem somewhat lax. Really, if the lower orders don't set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them? They seem, as a class, to have absolutely no sense of moral responsibility.

[Enter **Lane**.]

Lane. Mr. Ernest Worthing.

[Enter **Jack**.]

[**Lane** goes out.]

Algernon. How are you, my dear Ernest? What brings you up to town?

Jack. Oh, pleasure, pleasure! What else should bring one anywhere? Eating as usual, I see, Algy!

Algernon. [Stiffly.] I believe it is customary in good society to take some slight refreshment at five o'clock. Where have you been since last Thursday?

Jack. [Sitting down on the sofa.] In the country.

Algernon. What on earth do you do there?

Jack. [Pulling off his gloves.] When one is in town one amuses oneself. When one is in the country one amuses other people. It is excessively boring.

Algernon. And who are the people you amuse?

Jack. [Airily.] Oh, neighbours, neighbours.

Algernon. Got nice neighbours in your part of Shropshire?

Jack. Perfectly horrid! Never speak to one of them.

Algernon. How immensely you must amuse them! [Goes over and takes sandwich.] By the way, Shropshire is your county, is it not?

Jack. Eh? Shropshire? Yes, of course. Hallo! Why all these cups? Why cucumber sandwiches? Why such reckless extravagance in one so young? Who is coming to tea?

Algernon. Oh! merely Aunt Augusta and Gwendolen.

Jack. How perfectly delightful!

Algernon. Yes, that is all very well; but I am afraid Aunt Augusta won't quite approve of your being here.

Jack. May I ask why?

Algernon. My dear fellow, the way you flirt with Gwendolen is perfectly disgraceful. It is almost as bad as the way Gwendolen flirts with you.

Jack. I am in love with Gwendolen. I have come up to town expressly to propose to her.

Algernon. I thought you had come up for pleasure? . . . I call that business.

Jack. How utterly unromantic you are!

Algernon. I really don't see anything romantic in proposing. It is very romantic to be in love. But there is nothing romantic about a definite proposal. Why, one may be accepted. One usually is, I believe. Then the excitement is all over. The very essence of romance is uncertainty. If ever I get married, I'll certainly try to forget the fact.

Jack. I have no doubt about that, dear Algy. The Divorce Court was specially invented for people whose memories are so curiously constituted.

Algernon. Oh! there is no use speculating on that subject. Divorces are made in Heaven—[**Jack** puts out his hand to take a sandwich. **Algernon** at once interferes.] Please don't touch the cucumber sandwiches. They are ordered specially for Aunt Augusta. [Takes one and eats it.]

Jack. Well, you have been eating them all the time.

Algernon. That is quite a different matter. She is my aunt. [Takes plate from below.] Have some bread and butter. The bread and butter is for Gwendolen. Gwendolen is devoted to bread and butter.

Jack. [Advancing to table and helping himself.] And very good bread and butter it is too.

Algernon. Well, my dear fellow, you need not eat as if you were going to eat it all. You behave as if you were married to her already. You are not married to her already, and I don't think you ever will be.

Jack. Why on earth do you say that?

Algernon. Well, in the first place girls never marry the men they flirt with. Girls don't think it right.

Jack. Oh, that is nonsense!

Algernon. It isn't. It is a great truth. It accounts for the extraordinary number of bachelors that one sees all over the place. In the second place, I don't give my consent.

Jack. Your consent!

Algernon. My dear fellow, Gwendolen is my first cousin. And before I allow you to marry her, you will have to clear up the whole question of Cecily. [Rings bell.]

Jack. Cecily! What on earth do you mean? What do you mean, Algy, by Cecily! I don't know any one of the name of Cecily.

[Enter **Lane**.]

Algernon. Bring me that cigarette case Mr. Worthing left in the smoking-room the last time he dined here.

Lane. Yes, sir. [**Lane** goes out.]

Jack. Do you mean to say you have had my cigarette case all this time? I wish to goodness you had let me know. I have been writing frantic letters to Scotland Yard about it. I was very nearly offering a large reward.

Algernon. Well, I wish you would offer one. I happen to be more than usually hard up.

Jack. There is no good offering a large reward now that the thing is found.

[Enter **Lane** with the cigarette case on a salver. **Algernon** takes it at once. **Lane** goes out.]

Algernon. I think that is rather mean of you, Ernest, I must say. [Opens case and examines it.] However, it makes no matter, for, now that I look at the inscription inside, I find that the thing isn't yours after all.

Jack. Of course it's mine. [Moving to him.] You have seen me with it a hundred times, and you

have no right whatsoever to read what is written inside. It is a very ungentlemanly thing to read a private cigarette case.

Algernon. Oh! it is absurd to have a hard and fast rule about what one should read and what one shouldn't. More than half of modern culture depends on what one shouldn't read.

Jack. I am quite aware of the fact, and I don't propose to discuss modern culture. It isn't the sort of thing one should talk of in private. I simply want my cigarette case back.

Algernon. Yes; but this isn't your cigarette case. This cigarette case is a present from some one of the name of Cecily, and you said you didn't know any one of that name.

Jack. Well, if you want to know, Cecily happens to be my aunt.

Algernon. Your aunt!

Jack. Yes. Charming old lady she is, too. Lives at Tunbridge Wells[5]. Just give it back to me, Algy.

Algernon. [Retreating to back of sofa.] But why does she call herself little Cecily if she is your aunt and lives at Tunbridge Wells? [Reading.] 'From little Cecily with her fondest love.'

Jack. [Moving to sofa and kneeling upon it.] My dear fellow, what on earth is there in that? Some aunts are tall, some aunts are not tall. That is a matter that surely an aunt may be allowed to decide for herself. You seem to think that every aunt should be exactly like your aunt! That is absurd! For Heaven's sake give me back my cigarette case. [Follows **Algernon** round the room.]

Algernon. Yes. But why does your aunt call you her uncle? 'From little Cecily, with her fondest love to her dear Uncle Jack.' There is no objection, I admit, to an aunt being a small aunt, but why an aunt, no matter what her size may be, should call her own nephew her uncle, I can't quite make out. Besides, your name isn't Jack at all; it is Ernest.

Jack. It isn't Ernest; it's Jack.

Algernon. You have always told me it was Ernest. I have introduced you to every one as Ernest. You answer to the name of Ernest. You look as if your name was Ernest. You are the most earnest-looking person I ever saw in my life. It is perfectly absurd your saying that your name isn't Ernest. It's on your cards. Here is one of them. [Taking it from case.] 'Mr. Ernest Worthing, B. 4, The Albany.[6]' I'll keep this as a proof that your name is Ernest if ever you attempt to deny it to me, or to Gwendolen, or to any one else. [Puts the card in his pocket.]

Jack. Well, my name is Ernest in town and Jack in the country, and the cigarette case was given to me in the country.

Algernon. Yes, but that does not account for the fact that your small Aunt Cecily, who lives at Tunbridge Wells, calls you her dear uncle. Come, old boy, you had much better have the thing out at once.

Jack. My dear Algy, you talk exactly as if you were a dentist. It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist when one isn't a dentist. It produces a false impression.

Algernon. Well, that is exactly what dentists always do. Now, go on! Tell me the whole thing. I may mention that I have always suspected you of being a confirmed and secret Bunburyist; and I am quite sure of it now.

Jack. Bunburyist? What on earth do you mean by a Bunburyist?

Algernon. I'll reveal to you the meaning of that incomparable expression as soon as you are kind enough to inform me why you are Ernest in town and Jack in the country.

Jack. Well, produce my cigarette case first.

5. Spa town in Kent, southeast of London.

6. Prestigious block of bachelor flats in Mayfair. Lord Byron once lived there.

Algernon. Here it is. [Hands cigarette case.] Now produce your explanation, and pray make it improbable. [Sits on sofa.]

Jack. My dear fellow, there is nothing improbable about my explanation at all. In fact it's perfectly ordinary. Old Mr. Thomas Cardew, who adopted me when I was a little boy, made me in his will guardian to his grand-daughter, Miss Cecily Cardew. Cecily, who addresses me as her uncle from motives of respect that you could not possibly appreciate, lives at my place in the country under the charge of her admirable governess, Miss Prism.

Algernon. Where is that place in the country, by the way?

Jack. That is nothing to you, dear boy. You are not going to be invited . . . I may tell you candidly that the place is not in Shropshire.

Algernon. I suspected that, my dear fellow! I have Bunburyed all over Shropshire on two separate occasions. Now, go on. Why are you Ernest in town and Jack in the country?

Jack. My dear Algy, I don't know whether you will be able to understand my real motives. You are hardly serious enough. When one is placed in the position of guardian, one has to adopt a very high moral tone on all subjects. It's one's duty to do so. And as a high moral tone can hardly be said to conduce very much to either one's health or one's happiness, in order to get up to town I have always pretended to have a younger brother of the name of Ernest, who lives in the Albany, and gets into the most dreadful scrapes. That, my dear Algy, is the whole truth pure and simple.

Algernon. The truth is rarely pure and never simple. Modern life would be very tedious if it were either, and modern literature a complete impossibility!

Jack. That wouldn't be at all a bad thing.

Algernon. Literary criticism is not your forte, my dear fellow. Don't try it. You should leave that to people who haven't been at a University. They do it so well in the daily papers. What you really are is a Bunburyist. I was quite right in saying you were a Bunburyist. You are one of the most advanced Bunburyists I know.

Jack. What on earth do you mean?

Algernon. You have invented a very useful younger brother called Ernest, in order that you may be able to come up to town as often as you like. I have invented an invaluable permanent invalid called Bunbury, in order that I may be able to go down into the country whenever I choose. Bunbury is perfectly invaluable. If it wasn't for Bunbury's extraordinary bad health, for instance, I wouldn't be able to dine with you at Willis's to-night, for I have been really engaged to Aunt Augusta for more than a week.

Jack. I haven't asked you to dine with me anywhere to-night.

Algernon. I know. You are absurdly careless about sending out invitations. It is very foolish of you. Nothing annoys people so much as not receiving invitations.

Jack. You had much better dine with your Aunt Augusta.

Algernon. I haven't the smallest intention of doing anything of the kind. To begin with, I dined there on Monday, and once a week is quite enough to dine with one's own relations. In the second place, whenever I do dine there I am always treated as a member of the family, and sent down[7] with either no woman at all, or two. In the third place, I know perfectly well whom she will place me next to, to-night. She will place me next Mary Farquhar, who always flirts with her own husband across the dinner-table. That is not very pleasant. Indeed, it is not even decent . . . and that sort of thing is enormously on the increase. The amount of women in London who flirt with their own husbands is perfectly scandalous. It looks so bad. It is simply washing one's clean linen in public. Besides,

7. Dinner guests were sent down from the drawing room; each gentleman was assigned a lady to escort for the evening.

now that I know you to be a confirmed Bunburyist I naturally want to talk to you about Bunburying. I want to tell you the rules.

Jack. I'm not a Bunburyist at all. If Gwendolen accepts me, I am going to kill my brother, indeed I think I'll kill him in any case. Cecily is a little too much interested in him. It is rather a bore. So I am going to get rid of Ernest. And I strongly advise you to do the same with Mr. . . . with your invalid friend who has the absurd name.

Algernon. Nothing will induce me to part with Bunbury, and if you ever get married, which seems to me extremely problematic, you will be very glad to know Bunbury. A man who marries without knowing Bunbury has a very tedious time of it.

Jack. That is nonsense. If I marry a charming girl like Gwendolen, and she is the only girl I ever saw in my life that I would marry, I certainly won't want to know Bunbury.

Algernon. Then your wife will. You don't seem to realise, that in married life three is company and two is none.

Jack. [Sententiously.] That, my dear young friend, is the theory that the corrupt French Drama[8] has been propounding for the last fifty years.

Algernon. Yes; and that the happy English home has proved in half the time.

Jack. For heaven's sake, don't try to be cynical. It's perfectly easy to be cynical.

Algernon. My dear fellow, it isn't easy to be anything nowadays. There's such a lot of beastly competition about. [The sound of an electric bell is heard.] Ah! that must be Aunt Augusta. Only relatives, or creditors, ever ring in that Wagnerian[9] manner. Now, if I get her out of the way for ten minutes, so that you can have an opportunity for proposing to Gwendolen, may I dine with you to-night at Willis's[10]?

Jack. I suppose so, if you want to.

Algernon. Yes, but you must be serious about it. I hate people who are not serious about meals. It is so shallow of them.

[Enter **Lane**.]

Lane. Lady Bracknell and Miss Fairfax.

[**Algernon** goes forward to meet them. Enter **Lady Bracknell** and **Gwendolen**.]

Lady Bracknell. Good afternoon, dear Algernon, I hope you are behaving very well.

Algernon. I'm feeling very well, Aunt Augusta.

Lady Bracknell. That's not quite the same thing. In fact the two things rarely go together. [Sees **Jack** and bows to him with icy coldness.]

Algernon. [To **Gwendolen**.] Dear me, you are smart!

Gwendolen. I am always smart! Am I not, Mr. Worthing?

Jack. You're quite perfect, Miss Fairfax.

Gwendolen. Oh! I hope I am not that. It would leave no room for developments, and I intend to develop in many directions. [**Gwendolen** and **Jack** sit down together in the corner.]

Lady Bracknell. I'm sorry if we are a little late, Algernon, but I was obliged to call on dear Lady Harbury. I hadn't been there since her poor husband's death. I never saw a woman so altered; she looks quite twenty years younger. And now I'll have a cup of tea, and one of those nice cucumber sandwiches you promised me.

Algernon. Certainly, Aunt Augusta. [Goes over to tea-table.]

Lady Bracknell. Won't you come and sit here, Gwendolen?

Gwendolen. Thanks, mamma, I'm quite comfortable where I am.

8. The French drama of the time frequently dealt with marital infidelity.
9. Portentous, loud, as in an opera by Richard Wagner (1813-1883).
10. An elegant restaurant near the St. James theatre.

Algernon. [Picking up empty plate in horror.] Good heavens! Lane! Why are there no cucumber sandwiches? I ordered them specially.

Lane. [Gravely.] There were no cucumbers in the market this morning, sir. I went down twice.

Algernon. No cucumbers!

Lane. No, sir. Not even for ready money[11].

Algernon. That will do, Lane, thank you.

Lane. Thank you, sir. [Goes out.]

Algernon. I am greatly distressed, Aunt Augusta, about there being no cucumbers, not even for ready money.

Lady Bracknell. It really makes no matter, Algernon. I had some crumpets with Lady Harbury, who seems to me to be living entirely for pleasure now.

Algernon. I hear her hair has turned quite gold from grief.

Lady Bracknell. It certainly has changed its colour. From what cause I, of course, cannot say. [**Algernon** crosses and hands tea.] Thank you. I've quite a treat for you to-night, Algernon. I am going to send you down with Mary Farquhar. She is such a nice woman, and so attentive to her husband. It's delightful to watch them.

Algernon. I am afraid, Aunt Augusta, I shall have to give up the pleasure of dining with you to-night after all.

Lady Bracknell. [Frowning.] I hope not, Algernon. It would put my table completely out. Your uncle would have to dine upstairs. Fortunately he is accustomed to that.

Algernon. It is a great bore, and, I need hardly say, a terrible disappointment to me, but the fact is I have just had a telegram to say that my poor friend Bunbury is very ill again. [Exchanges glances with **Jack**.] They seem to think I should be with him.

Lady Bracknell. It is very strange. This Mr. Bunbury seems to suffer from curiously bad health.

Algernon. Yes; poor Bunbury is a dreadful invalid.

Lady Bracknell. Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die. This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life. I am always telling that to your poor uncle, but he never seems to take much notice . . . as far as any improvement in his ailment goes. I should be much obliged if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday, for I rely on you to arrange my music for me. It is my last reception, and one wants something that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season[12] when every one has practically said whatever they had to say, which, in most cases, was probably not much.

Algernon. I'll speak to Bunbury, Aunt Augusta, if he is still conscious, and I think I can promise you he'll be all right by Saturday. Of course the music is a great difficulty. You see, if one plays good music, people don't listen, and if one plays bad music people don't talk. But I'll run over the programme I've drawn out, if you will kindly come into the next room for a moment.

Lady Bracknell. Thank you, Algernon. It is very thoughtful of you. [Rising, and following **Algernon**.] I'm sure the programme will be delightful, after a few expurgations. French songs I cannot possibly allow. People always seem to think that they are improper, and either look shocked, which is vulgar, or laugh, which is worse. But German sounds a thoroughly respectable language, and indeed, I believe is so. Gwendolen, you will accompany me.

11. Cash, not credit

12. The London Season is the part of the year when the Court and fashionable society generally are in town: May through July.

Gwendolen. Certainly, mamma.

[**Lady Bracknell** and **Algernon** go into the music-room, **Gwendolen** remains behind.]

Jack. Charming day it has been, Miss Fairfax.

Gwendolen. Pray don't talk to me about the weather, Mr. Worthing. Whenever people talk to me about the weather, I always feel quite certain that they mean something else. And that makes me so nervous.

Jack. I do mean something else.

Gwendolen. I thought so. In fact, I am never wrong.

Jack. And I would like to be allowed to take advantage of Lady Bracknell's temporary absence . . .

Gwendolen. I would certainly advise you to do so. Mamma has a way of coming back suddenly into a room that I have often had to speak to her about.

Jack. [Nervously.] Miss Fairfax, ever since I met you I have admired you more than any girl . . . I have ever met since . . . I met you.

Gwendolen. Yes, I am quite well aware of the fact. And I often wish that in public, at any rate, you had been more demonstrative. For me you have always had an irresistible fascination. Even before I met you I was far from indifferent to you. [**Jack** looks at her in amazement.] We live, as I hope you know, Mr. Worthing, in an age of ideals. The fact is constantly mentioned in the more expensive monthly magazines, and has reached the provincial pulpits, I am told; and my ideal has always been to love some one of the name of Ernest. There is something in that name that inspires absolute confidence. The moment Algernon first mentioned to me that he had a friend called Ernest, I knew I was destined to love you.

Jack. You really love me, Gwendolen?

Gwendolen. Passionately!

Jack. Darling! You don't know how happy you've made me.

Gwendolen. My own Ernest!

Jack. But you don't really mean to say that you couldn't love me if my name wasn't Ernest?

Gwendolen. But your name is Ernest.

Jack. Yes, I know it is. But supposing it was something else? Do you mean to say you couldn't love me then?

Gwendolen. [Glibly.] Ah! that is clearly a metaphysical speculation, and like most metaphysical speculations has very little reference at all to the actual facts of real life, as we know them.

Jack. Personally, darling, to speak quite candidly, I don't much care about the name of Ernest . . . I don't think the name suits me at all.

Gwendolen. It suits you perfectly. It is a divine name. It has a music of its own. It produces vibrations.

Jack. Well, really, Gwendolen, I must say that I think there are lots of other much nicer names. I think Jack, for instance, a charming name.

Gwendolen. Jack? . . . No, there is very little music in the name Jack, if any at all, indeed. It does not thrill. It produces absolutely no vibrations . . . I have known several Jacks, and they all, without exception, were more than usually plain. Besides, Jack is a notorious domesticity for John! And I pity any woman who is married to a man called John. She would probably never be allowed to know the entrancing pleasure of a single moment's solitude. The only really safe name is Ernest.

Jack. Gwendolen, I must get christened at once—I mean we must get married at once. There is no time to be lost.

Gwendolen. Married, Mr. Worthing?

Jack. [Astounded.] Well . . . surely. You know that I love you, and you led me to believe, Miss Fairfax, that you were not absolutely indifferent to me.

Gwendolen. I adore you. But you haven't proposed to me yet. Nothing has been said at all about marriage. The subject has not even been touched on.

Jack. Well . . . may I propose to you now?

Gwendolen. I think it would be an admirable opportunity. And to spare you any possible disappointment, Mr. Worthing, I think it only fair to tell you quite frankly before-hand that I am fully determined to accept you.

Jack. Gwendolen!

Gwendolen. Yes, Mr. Worthing, what have you got to say to me?

Jack. You know what I have got to say to you.

Gwendolen. Yes, but you don't say it.

Jack. Gwendolen, will you marry me? [Goes on his knees.]

Gwendolen. Of course I will, darling. How long you have been about it! I am afraid you have had very little experience in how to propose.

Jack. My own one, I have never loved any one in the world but you.

Gwendolen. Yes, but men often propose for practice. I know my brother Gerald does. All my girl-friends tell me so. What wonderfully blue eyes you have, Ernest! They are quite, quite, blue. I hope you will always look at me just like that, especially when there are other people present. [Enter **Lady Bracknell**.]

Lady Bracknell. Mr. Worthing! Rise, sir, from this semi-recumbent posture. It is most indecorous.

Gwendolen. Mamma! [He tries to rise; she restrains him.] I must beg you to retire. This is no place for you. Besides, Mr. Worthing has not quite finished yet.

Lady Bracknell. Finished what, may I ask?

Gwendolen. I am engaged to Mr. Worthing, mamma. [They rise together.]

Lady Bracknell. Pardon me, you are not engaged to any one. When you do become engaged to some one, I, or your father, should his health permit him, will inform you of the fact. An engagement should come on a young girl as a surprise, pleasant or unpleasant, as the case may be. It is hardly a matter that she could be allowed to arrange for herself . . . And now I have a few questions to put to you, Mr. Worthing. While I am making these inquiries, you, Gwendolen, will wait for me below in the carriage.

Gwendolen. [Reproachfully.] Mamma!

Lady Bracknell. In the carriage, Gwendolen! [**Gwendolen** goes to the door. She and **Jack** blow kisses to each other behind **Lady Bracknell's** back. **Lady Bracknell** looks vaguely about as if she could not understand what the noise was. Finally turns round.] Gwendolen, the carriage!

Gwendolen. Yes, mamma. [Goes out, looking back at **Jack**.]

Lady Bracknell. [Sitting down.] You can take a seat, Mr. Worthing.

[Looks in her pocket for note-book and pencil.]

Jack. Thank you, Lady Bracknell, I prefer standing.

Lady Bracknell. [Pencil and note-book in hand.] I feel bound to tell you that you are not down on my list of eligible young men, although I have the same list as the dear Duchess of Bolton has. We work together, in fact. However, I am quite ready to enter your name, should your answers be what a really affectionate mother requires. Do you smoke?

Jack. Well, yes, I must admit I smoke.

Lady Bracknell. I am glad to hear it. A man should always have an occupation of some kind. There are far too many idle men in London as it is. How old are you?

Jack. Twenty-nine.

Lady Bracknell. A very good age to be married at. I have always been of opinion that a man who desires to get married should know either everything or nothing. Which do you know?

Jack. [After some hesitation.] I know nothing, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. I am pleased to hear it. I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance. Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone. The whole theory of modern education is radically unsound. Fortunately in England, at any rate, education produces no effect whatsoever. If it did, it would prove a serious danger to the upper classes, and probably lead to acts of violence in Grosvenor Square. What is your income?

Jack. Between seven and eight thousand a year.

Lady Bracknell. [Makes a note in her book.] In land, or in investments?

Jack. In investments, chiefly.

Lady Bracknell. That is satisfactory. What between the duties expected of one during one's lifetime, and the duties exacted from one after one's death[13], land has ceased to be either a profit or a pleasure. It gives one position, and prevents one from keeping it up. That's all that can be said about land.

Jack. I have a country house with some land, of course, attached to it, about fifteen hundred acres, I believe; but I don't depend on that for my real income. In fact, as far as I can make out, the poachers are the only people who make anything out of it.

Lady Bracknell. A country house! How many bedrooms? Well, that point can be cleared up afterwards. You have a town house, I hope? A girl with a simple, unspoiled nature, like Gwendolen, could hardly be expected to reside in the country.

Jack. Well, I own a house in Belgrave Square, but it is let by the year to Lady Bloxham. Of course, I can get it back whenever I like, at six months' notice.

Lady Bracknell. Lady Bloxham? I don't know her.

Jack. Oh, she goes about very little. She is a lady considerably advanced in years.

Lady Bracknell. Ah, nowadays that is no guarantee of respectability of character. What number in Belgrave Square[14]?

Jack. 149.

Lady Bracknell. [Shaking her head.] The unfashionable side. I thought there was something. However, that could easily be altered.

Jack. Do you mean the fashion, or the side?

Lady Bracknell. [Sternly.] Both, if necessary, I presume. What are your politics?

Jack. Well, I am afraid I really have none. I am a Liberal Unionist[15].

Lady Bracknell. Oh, they count as Tories. They dine with us. Or come in the evening, at any rate. Now to minor matters. Are your parents living?

Jack. I have lost both my parents.

Lady Bracknell. To lose one parent, Mr. Worthing, may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness. Who was your father? He was evidently a man of some wealth. Was he born in what the Radical papers call the purple of commerce, or did he rise from the ranks of the aristocracy?

Jack. I am afraid I really don't know. The fact is, Lady Bracknell, I said I had lost my parents. It

13. Death duties were inheritance taxes.

14. Another fashionable district in London's West End, south of Mayfair.

15. A political party formed in 1885 by a Liberal Party split on the matter of home rule for Ireland. The Unionists sided with the Tories, hence they "count as Tories," the party favoured by the highly conservative Lady Bracknell.

would be nearer the truth to say that my parents seem to have lost me . . . I don't actually know who I am by birth. I was . . . well, I was found.

Lady Bracknell. Found!

Jack. The late Mr. Thomas Cardew, an old gentleman of a very charitable and kindly disposition, found me, and gave me the name of Worthing, because he happened to have a first-class ticket for Worthing in his pocket at the time. Worthing is a place in Sussex. It is a seaside resort.

Lady Bracknell. Where did the charitable gentleman who had a first-class ticket for this seaside resort find you?

Jack. [Gravely.] In a hand-bag.

Lady Bracknell. A hand-bag?

Jack. [Very seriously.] Yes, Lady Bracknell. I was in a hand-bag—a somewhat large, black leather hand-bag, with handles to it—an ordinary hand-bag in fact.

Lady Bracknell. In what locality did this Mr. James, or Thomas, Cardew come across this ordinary hand-bag?

Jack. In the cloak-room at Victoria Station[16]. It was given to him in mistake for his own.

Lady Bracknell. The cloak-room at Victoria Station?

Jack. Yes. The Brighton line.

Lady Bracknell. The line is immaterial. Mr. Worthing, I confess I feel somewhat bewildered by what you have just told me. To be born, or at any rate bred, in a hand-bag, whether it had handles or not, seems to me to display a contempt for the ordinary decencies of family life that reminds one of the worst excesses of the French Revolution. And I presume you know what that unfortunate movement led to? As for the particular locality in which the hand-bag was found, a cloak-room at a railway station might serve to conceal a social indiscretion—has probably, indeed, been used for that purpose before now—but it could hardly be regarded as an assured basis for a recognised position in good society.

Jack. May I ask you then what you would advise me to do? I need hardly say I would do anything in the world to ensure Gwendolen's happiness.

Lady Bracknell. I would strongly advise you, Mr. Worthing, to try and acquire some relations as soon as possible, and to make a definite effort to produce at any rate one parent, of either sex, before the season is quite over.

Jack. Well, I don't see how I could possibly manage to do that. I can produce the hand-bag at any moment. It is in my dressing-room at home. I really think that should satisfy you, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. Me, sir! What has it to do with me? You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our only daughter—a girl brought up with the utmost care—to marry into a cloak-room, and form an alliance with a parcel? Good morning, Mr. Worthing!

[**Lady Bracknell** sweeps out in majestic indignation.]

Jack. Good morning! [**Algernon**, from the other room, strikes up the Wedding March. Jack looks perfectly furious, and goes to the door.] For goodness' sake don't play that ghastly tune, Algy. How idiotic you are!

[The music stops and **Algernon** enters cheerily.]

Algernon. Didn't it go off all right, old boy? You don't mean to say Gwendolen refused you? I know it is a way she has. She is always refusing people. I think it is most ill-natured of her.

Jack. Oh, Gwendolen is as right as a trivet[17]. As far as she is concerned, we are engaged. Her mother is perfectly unbearable. Never met such a Gorgon[18] . . . I don't really know what a Gorgon

16. A West End railway terminal with regularly scheduled departures to Brighton, a seaside town in Sussex, south of London.

17. Colloquialism; steady. A trivet is a three-legged stand for a pot or kettle.

18. Hideous monsters in Greek mythology whose glance turned men into stone.

is like, but I am quite sure that Lady Bracknell is one. In any case, she is a monster, without being a myth, which is rather unfair . . . I beg your pardon, Algy, I suppose I shouldn't talk about your own aunt in that way before you.

Algernon. My dear boy, I love hearing my relations abused. It is the only thing that makes me put up with them at all. Relations are simply a tedious pack of people, who haven't got the remotest knowledge of how to live, nor the smallest instinct about when to die.

Jack. Oh, that is nonsense!

Algernon. It isn't!

Jack. Well, I won't argue about the matter. You always want to argue about things.

Algernon. That is exactly what things were originally made for.

Jack. Upon my word, if I thought that, I'd shoot myself . . . [A pause.] You don't think there is any chance of Gwendolen becoming like her mother in about a hundred and fifty years, do you, Algy?

Algernon. All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That's his.

Jack. Is that clever?

Algernon. It is perfectly phrased! and quite as true as any observation in civilised life should be.

Jack. I am sick to death of cleverness. Everybody is clever nowadays. You can't go anywhere without meeting clever people. The thing has become an absolute public nuisance. I wish to goodness we had a few fools left.

Algernon. We have.

Jack. I should extremely like to meet them. What do they talk about?

Algernon. The fools? Oh! about the clever people, of course.

Jack. What fools!

Algernon. By the way, did you tell Gwendolen the truth about your being Ernest in town, and Jack in the country?

Jack. [In a very patronising manner.] My dear fellow, the truth isn't quite the sort of thing one tells to a nice, sweet, refined girl. What extraordinary ideas you have about the way to behave to a woman!

Algernon. The only way to behave to a woman is to make love to her, if she is pretty, and to some one else, if she is plain.

Jack. Oh, that is nonsense.

Algernon. What about your brother? What about the profligate Ernest?

Jack. Oh, before the end of the week I shall have got rid of him. I'll say he died in Paris of apoplexy. Lots of people die of apoplexy, quite suddenly, don't they?

Algernon. Yes, but it's hereditary, my dear fellow. It's a sort of thing that runs in families. You had much better say a severe chill.

Jack. You are sure a severe chill isn't hereditary, or anything of that kind?

Algernon. Of course it isn't!

Jack. Very well, then. My poor brother Ernest to carried off suddenly, in Paris, by a severe chill. That gets rid of him.

Algernon. But I thought you said that . . . Miss Cardew was a little too much interested in your poor brother Ernest? Won't she feel his loss a good deal?

Jack. Oh, that is all right. Cecily is not a silly romantic girl, I am glad to say. She has got a capital appetite, goes long walks, and pays no attention at all to her lessons.

Algernon. I would rather like to see Cecily.

Jack. I will take very good care you never do. She is excessively pretty, and she is only just eighteen.

Algernon. Have you told Gwendolen yet that you have an excessively pretty ward who is only just eighteen?

Jack. Oh! one doesn't blurt these things out to people. Cecily and Gwendolen are perfectly certain to be extremely great friends. I'll bet you anything you like that half an hour after they have met, they will be calling each other sister.

Algernon. Women only do that when they have called each other a lot of other things first. Now, my dear boy, if we want to get a good table at Willis's, we really must go and dress. Do you know it is nearly seven?

Jack. [Irritably.] Oh! It always is nearly seven.

Algernon. Well, I'm hungry.

Jack. I never knew you when you weren't . . .

Algernon. What shall we do after dinner? Go to a theatre?

Jack. Oh no! I loathe listening.

Algernon. Well, let us go to the Club?

Jack. Oh, no! I hate talking.

Algernon. Well, we might trot round to the Empire[19] at ten?

Jack. Oh, no! I can't bear looking at things. It is so silly.

Algernon. Well, what shall we do?

Jack. Nothing!

Algernon. It is awfully hard work doing nothing. However, I don't mind hard work where there is no definite object of any kind.

[Enter **Lane**.]

Lane. Miss Fairfax.

[Enter **Gwendolen**. **Lane** goes out.]

Algernon. Gwendolen, upon my word!

Gwendolen. Algy, kindly turn your back. I have something very particular to say to Mr. Worthing.

Algernon. Really, Gwendolen, I don't think I can allow this at all.

Gwendolen. Algy, you always adopt a strictly immoral attitude towards life. You are not quite old enough to do that. [**Algernon** retires to the fireplace.]

Jack. My own darling!

Gwendolen. Ernest, we may never be married. From the expression on mamma's face I fear we never shall. Few parents nowadays pay any regard to what their children say to them. The old-fashioned respect for the young is fast dying out. Whatever influence I ever had over mamma, I lost at the age of three. But although she may prevent us from becoming man and wife, and I may marry some one else, and marry often, nothing that she can possibly do can alter my eternal devotion to you.

Jack. Dear Gwendolen!

Gwendolen. The story of your romantic origin, as related to me by mamma, with unpleasing comments, has naturally stirred the deeper fibres of my nature. Your Christian name has an irresistible fascination. The simplicity of your character makes you exquisitely incomprehensible to me. Your town address at the Albany I have. What is your address in the country?

19. Popular music hall (vaudeville theatre) in Leicester Square on eastern edge of the West End.

Jack. The Manor House, Woolton[20], Hertfordshire.

[**Algernon**, who has been carefully listening, smiles to himself, and writes the address on his shirt-cuff. Then picks up the Railway Guide.]

Gwendolen. There is a good postal service, I suppose? It may be necessary to do something desperate. That of course will require serious consideration. I will communicate with you daily.

Jack. My own one!

Gwendolen. How long do you remain in town?

Jack. Till Monday.

Gwendolen. Good! Algy, you may turn round now.

Algernon. Thanks, I've turned round already.

Gwendolen. You may also ring the bell.

Jack. You will let me see you to your carriage, my own darling?

Gwendolen. Certainly.

Jack. [To **Lane**, who now enters.] I will see Miss Fairfax out.

Lane. Yes, sir. [**Jack** and **Gwendolen** go off.]

[**Lane** presents several letters on a salver to **Algernon**. It is to be surmised that they are bills, as **Algernon**, after looking at the envelopes, tears them up.]

Algernon. A glass of sherry, Lane.

Lane. Yes, sir.

Algernon. To-morrow, Lane, I'm going Bunburying.

Lane. Yes, sir.

Algernon. I shall probably not be back till Monday. You can put up my dress clothes, my smoking jacket, and all the Bunbury suits . . .

Lane. Yes, sir. [Handing sherry.]

Algernon. I hope to-morrow will be a fine day, Lane.

Lane. It never is, sir.

Algernon. Lane, you're a perfect pessimist.

Lane. I do my best to give satisfaction, sir.

[Enter **Jack**. **Lane** goes off.]

Jack. There's a sensible, intellectual girl! the only girl I ever cared for in my life. [**Algernon** is laughing immoderately.] What on earth are you so amused at?

Algernon. Oh, I'm a little anxious about poor Bunbury, that is all.

Jack. If you don't take care, your friend Bunbury will get you into a serious scrape some day.

Algernon. I love scrapes. They are the only things that are never serious.

Jack. Oh, that's nonsense, Algy. You never talk anything but nonsense.

Algernon. Nobody ever does.

[**Jack** looks indignantly at him, and leaves the room. **Algernon** lights a cigarette, reads his shirt-cuff, and smiles.]

20. A community in Shropshire, south of Liverpool and not in Hertfordshire.

61.

The Importance of Being Earnest: Act II

Oscar Wilde

SCENE

Garden at the Manor House. A flight of grey stone steps leads up to the house. The garden, an old-fashioned one, full of roses. Time of year, July. Basket chairs, and a table covered with books, are set under a large yew-tree.

[**Miss Prism**[1] discovered seated at the table. **Cecily** is at the back watering flowers.]

Miss Prism. [Calling.] Cecily, Cecily! Surely such a utilitarian occupation as the watering of flowers is rather Moulton's duty than yours? Especially at a moment when intellectual pleasures await you. Your German grammar is on the table. Pray open it at page fifteen. We will repeat yesterday's lesson.

Cecily. [Coming over very slowly.] But I don't like German. It isn't at all a becoming language. I know perfectly well that I look quite plain after my German lesson.

Miss Prism. Child, you know how anxious your guardian is that you should improve yourself in every way. He laid particular stress on your German, as he was leaving for town yesterday. Indeed, he always lays stress on your German when he is leaving for town.

Cecily. Dear Uncle Jack is so very serious! Sometimes he is so serious that I think he cannot be quite well.

Miss Prism. [Drawing herself up.] Your guardian enjoys the best of health, and his gravity of demeanour is especially to be commended in one so comparatively young as he is. I know no one who has a higher sense of duty and responsibility.

Cecily. I suppose that is why he often looks a little bored when we three are together.

Miss Prism. Cecily! I am surprised at you. Mr. Worthing has many troubles in his life. Idle merriment and triviality would be out of place in his conversation. You must remember his constant anxiety about that unfortunate young man his brother.

Cecily. I wish Uncle Jack would allow that unfortunate young man, his brother, to come down here sometimes. We might have a good influence over him, Miss Prism. I am sure you certainly would. You know German, and geology, and things of that kind influence a man very much. [**Cecily** begins to write in her diary.]

Miss Prism. [Shaking her head.] I do not think that even I could produce any effect on a character that according to his own brother's admission is irretrievably weak and vacillating. Indeed I am not sure that I would desire to reclaim him. I am not in favour of this modern mania for turning bad people into good people at a moment's notice. As a man sows so let him reap[2]. You must put away your diary, Cecily. I really don't see why you should keep a diary at all.

Cecily. I keep a diary in order to enter the wonderful secrets of my life. If I didn't write them down, I should probably forget all about them.

1. The prim and proper Mrs. Prism calls to mind Mrs. General in Charles Dickens's *Little Dorrit* (1857), a teacher of manners for young ladies, who has the Dorrit girls repeat "prunes and prism" in order to give a pretty form to the lips.
2. cf. Galatians 6:7, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Miss Prism. Memory, my dear Cecily, is the diary that we all carry about with us.

Cecily. Yes, but it usually chronicles the things that have never happened, and couldn't possibly have happened. I believe that Memory is responsible for nearly all the three-volume novels that Mudie[3] sends us.

Miss Prism. Do not speak slightingly of the three-volume novel, Cecily. I wrote one myself in earlier days.

Cecily. Did you really, Miss Prism? How wonderfully clever you are! I hope it did not end happily? I don't like novels that end happily. They depress me so much.

Miss Prism. The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means.

Cecily. I suppose so. But it seems very unfair. And was your novel ever published?

Miss Prism. Alas! no. The manuscript unfortunately was abandoned. [**Cecily** starts.] I use the word in the sense of lost or mislaid. To your work, child, these speculations are profitless.

Cecily. [Smiling.] But I see dear Dr. Chasuble[4] coming up through the garden.

Miss Prism. [Rising and advancing.] Dr. Chasuble! This is indeed a pleasure.

[Enter **Canon Chasuble**.]

Chasuble. And how are we this morning? Miss Prism, you are, I trust, well?

Cecily. Miss Prism has just been complaining of a slight headache. I think it would do her so much good to have a short stroll with you in the Park, Dr. Chasuble.

Miss Prism. Cecily, I have not mentioned anything about a headache.

Cecily. No, dear Miss Prism, I know that, but I felt instinctively that you had a headache. Indeed I was thinking about that, and not about my German lesson, when the Rector came in.

Chasuble. I hope, Cecily, you are not inattentive.

Cecily. Oh, I am afraid I am.

Chasuble. That is strange. Were I fortunate enough to be Miss Prism's pupil, I would hang upon her lips. [**Miss Prism** glares.] I spoke metaphorically.—My metaphor was drawn from bees. Ahem! Mr. Worthing, I suppose, has not returned from town yet?

Miss Prism. We do not expect him till Monday afternoon.

Chasuble. Ah yes, he usually likes to spend his Sunday in London. He is not one of those whose sole aim is enjoyment, as, by all accounts, that unfortunate young man his brother seems to be. But I must not disturb Egeria[5] and her pupil any longer.

Miss Prism. Egeria? My name is Lætitia, Doctor.

Chasuble. [Bowing.] A classical allusion merely, drawn from the Pagan authors. I shall see you both no doubt at Evensong?

Miss Prism. I think, dear Doctor, I will have a stroll with you. I find I have a headache after all, and a walk might do it good.

Chasuble. With pleasure, Miss Prism, with pleasure. We might go as far as the schools and back.

Miss Prism. That would be delightful. Cecily, you will read your Political Economy[6] in my absence. The chapter on the Fall of the Rupee you may omit. It is somewhat too sensational. Even these metallic problems have their melodramatic side.

[Goes down the garden with **Dr. Chasuble**.]

Cecily. [Picks up books and throws them back on table.] Horrid Political Economy! Horrid Geography! Horrid, horrid German!

[Enter **Merriman** with a card on a salver.]

3. A lending library, founded in 1842 by Charles Mudie.
4. The main vestment worn by the priest when celebrating mass.
5. Proverbially a guide or counsellor, after the nymph who instructed Numa Pompilius, second king of Rome (753-673 BC).
6. Economics.

Merriman. Mr. Ernest Worthing has just driven over from the station. He has brought his luggage with him.

Cecily. [Takes the card and reads it.] 'Mr. Ernest Worthing, B. 4, The Albany, W.' Uncle Jack's brother! Did you tell him Mr. Worthing was in town?

Merriman. Yes, Miss. He seemed very much disappointed. I mentioned that you and Miss Prism were in the garden. He said he was anxious to speak to you privately for a moment.

Cecily. Ask Mr. Ernest Worthing to come here. I suppose you had better talk to the housekeeper about a room for him.

Merriman. Yes, Miss.

[**Merriman** goes off.]

Cecily. I have never met any really wicked person before. I feel rather frightened. I am so afraid he will look just like every one else.

[Enter **Algernon**, very gay and debonnair.] He does!

Algernon. [Raising his hat.] You are my little cousin Cecily, I'm sure.

Cecily. You are under some strange mistake. I am not little. In fact, I believe I am more than usually tall for my age. [**Algernon** is rather taken aback.] But I am your cousin Cecily. You, I see from your card, are Uncle Jack's brother, my cousin Ernest, my wicked cousin Ernest.

Algernon. Oh! I am not really wicked at all, cousin Cecily. You mustn't think that I am wicked.

Cecily. If you are not, then you have certainly been deceiving us all in a very inexcusable manner. I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy.

Algernon. [Looks at her in amazement.] Oh! Of course I have been rather reckless.

Cecily. I am glad to hear it.

Algernon. In fact, now you mention the subject, I have been very bad in my own small way.

Cecily. I don't think you should be so proud of that, though I am sure it must have been very pleasant.

Algernon. It is much pleasanter being here with you.

Cecily. I can't understand how you are here at all. Uncle Jack won't be back till Monday afternoon.

Algernon. That is a great disappointment. I am obliged to go up by the first train on Monday morning. I have a business appointment that I am anxious . . . to miss?

Cecily. Couldn't you miss it anywhere but in London?

Algernon. No: the appointment is in London.

Cecily. Well, I know, of course, how important it is not to keep a business engagement, if one wants to retain any sense of the beauty of life, but still I think you had better wait till Uncle Jack arrives. I know he wants to speak to you about your emigrating.

Algernon. About my what?

Cecily. Your emigrating. He has gone up to buy your outfit.

Algernon. I certainly wouldn't let Jack buy my outfit. He has no taste in neckties at all.

Cecily. I don't think you will require neckties. Uncle Jack is sending you to Australia.

Algernon. Australia! I'd sooner die.

Cecily. Well, he said at dinner on Wednesday night, that you would have to choose between this world, the next world, and Australia.

Algernon. Oh, well! The accounts I have received of Australia and the next world, are not particularly encouraging. This world is good enough for me, cousin Cecily.

Cecily. Yes, but are you good enough for it?

Algernon. I'm afraid I'm not that. That is why I want you to reform me. You might make that your mission, if you don't mind, cousin Cecily.

Cecily. I'm afraid I've no time, this afternoon.

Algernon. Well, would you mind my reforming myself this afternoon?

Cecily. It is rather Quixotic of you. But I think you should try.

Algernon. I will. I feel better already.

Cecily. You are looking a little worse.

Algernon. That is because I am hungry.

Cecily. How thoughtless of me. I should have remembered that when one is going to lead an entirely new life, one requires regular and wholesome meals. Won't you come in?

Algernon. Thank you. Might I have a buttonhole[7] first? I never have any appetite unless I have a buttonhole first.

Cecily. A Marechal Niel[8]? [Picks up scissors.]

Algernon. No, I'd sooner have a pink rose.

Cecily. Why? [Cuts a flower.]

Algernon. Because you are like a pink rose, Cousin Cecily.

Cecily. I don't think it can be right for you to talk to me like that. Miss Prism never says such things to me.

Algernon. Then Miss Prism is a short-sighted old lady. [**Cecily** puts the rose in his buttonhole.] You are the prettiest girl I ever saw.

Cecily. Miss Prism says that all good looks are a snare.

Algernon. They are a snare that every sensible man would like to be caught in.

Cecily. Oh, I don't think I would care to catch a sensible man. I shouldn't know what to talk to him about.

[They pass into the house. **Miss Prism** and **Dr. Chasuble** return.]

Miss Prism. You are too much alone, dear Dr. Chasuble. You should get married. A misanthrope I can understand—a womanthrope, never!

Chasuble. [With a scholar's shudder.] Believe me, I do not deserve so neologistic[9] a phrase. The precept as well as the practice of the Primitive Church[10] was distinctly against matrimony.

Miss Prism. [Sententiously.] That is obviously the reason why the Primitive Church has not lasted up to the present day. And you do not seem to realise, dear Doctor, that by persistently remaining single, a man converts himself into a permanent public temptation. Men should be more careful; this very celibacy leads weaker vessels astray.

Chasuble. But is a man not equally attractive when married?

Miss Prism. No married man is ever attractive except to his wife.

Chasuble. And often, I've been told, not even to her.

Miss Prism. That depends on the intellectual sympathies of the woman. Maturity can always be depended on. Ripeness can be trusted. Young women are green. [**Dr. Chasuble** starts.] I spoke horticulturally. My metaphor was drawn from fruits. But where is Cecily?

Chasuble. Perhaps she followed us to the schools.

[Enter **Jack** slowly from the back of the garden. He is dressed in the deepest mourning, with crape hatband and black gloves.]

Miss Prism. Mr. Worthing!

Chasuble. Mr. Worthing?

Miss Prism. This is indeed a surprise. We did not look for you till Monday afternoon.

7. A flower worn in the buttonhole of the lapel of a jacket. A trademark of former Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau (1919-2000).
8. A yellow rose.
9. Newly coined word. Chasuble would have expected "misogynist."
10. Early Christian church of the first to fourth centuries.

Jack. [Shakes **Miss Prism's** hand in a tragic manner.] I have returned sooner than I expected. Dr. Chasuble, I hope you are well?

Chasuble. Dear Mr. Worthing, I trust this garb of woe does not betoken some terrible calamity?

Jack. My brother.

Miss Prism. More shameful debts and extravagance?

Chasuble. Still leading his life of pleasure?

Jack. [Shaking his head.] Dead!

Chasuble. Your brother Ernest dead?

Jack. Quite dead.

Miss Prism. What a lesson for him! I trust he will profit by it.

Chasuble. Mr. Worthing, I offer you my sincere condolence. You have at least the consolation of knowing that you were always the most generous and forgiving of brothers.

Jack. Poor Ernest! He had many faults, but it is a sad, sad blow.

Chasuble. Very sad indeed. Were you with him at the end?

Jack. No. He died abroad; in Paris, in fact. I had a telegram last night from the manager of the Grand Hotel.

Chasuble. Was the cause of death mentioned?

Jack. A severe chill, it seems.

Miss Prism. As a man sows, so shall he reap.

Chasuble. [Raising his hand.] Charity, dear Miss Prism, charity! None of us are perfect. I myself am peculiarly susceptible to draughts. Will the interment take place here?

Jack. No. He seems to have expressed a desire to be buried in Paris.

Chasuble. In Paris! [Shakes his head.] I fear that hardly points to any very serious state of mind at the last. You would no doubt wish me to make some slight allusion to this tragic domestic affliction next Sunday. [**Jack** presses his hand convulsively.] My sermon on the meaning of the manna[11] in the wilderness can be adapted to almost any occasion, joyful, or, as in the present case, distressing. [All sigh.] I have preached it at harvest celebrations, christenings, confirmations, on days of humiliation and festal days. The last time I delivered it was in the Cathedral, as a charity sermon on behalf of the Society for the Prevention of Discontent among the Upper Orders. The Bishop, who was present, was much struck by some of the analogies I drew.

Jack. Ah! that reminds me, you mentioned christenings I think, Dr. Chasuble? I suppose you know how to christen all right? [**Dr. Chasuble** looks astounded.] I mean, of course, you are continually christening, aren't you?

Miss Prism. It is, I regret to say, one of the Rector's most constant duties in this parish. I have often spoken to the poorer classes on the subject. But they don't seem to know what thrift is.

Chasuble. But is there any particular infant in whom you are interested, Mr. Worthing? Your brother was, I believe, unmarried, was he not?

Jack. Oh yes.

Miss Prism. [Bitterly.] People who live entirely for pleasure usually are.

Jack. But it is not for any child, dear Doctor. I am very fond of children. No! the fact is, I would like to be christened myself, this afternoon, if you have nothing better to do.

Chasuble. But surely, Mr. Worthing, you have been christened already?

Jack. I don't remember anything about it.

Chasuble. But have you any grave doubts on the subject?

11. Miraculous food provided for the children of Israel in their journey from Egypt to the Holy Land. See Exodus16: 14-36.

Jack. I certainly intend to have. Of course I don't know if the thing would bother you in any way, or if you think I am a little too old now.

Chasuble. Not at all. The sprinkling, and, indeed, the immersion of adults is a perfectly canonical practice.

Jack. Immersion!

Chasuble. You need have no apprehensions. Sprinkling is all that is necessary, or indeed I think advisable. Our weather is so changeable. At what hour would you wish the ceremony performed?

Jack. Oh, I might trot round about five if that would suit you.

Chasuble. Perfectly, perfectly! In fact I have two similar ceremonies to perform at that time. A case of twins that occurred recently in one of the outlying cottages on your own estate. Poor Jenkins the carter, a most hard-working man.

Jack. Oh! I don't see much fun in being christened along with other babies. It would be childish. Would half-past five do?

Chasuble. Admirably! Admirably! [Takes out watch.] And now, dear Mr. Worthing, I will not intrude any longer into a house of sorrow. I would merely beg you not to be too much bowed down by grief. What seem to us bitter trials are often blessings in disguise.

Miss Prism. This seems to me a blessing of an extremely obvious kind.

[Enter **Cecily** from the house.]

Cecily. Uncle Jack! Oh, I am pleased to see you back. But what horrid clothes you have got on! Do go and change them.

Miss Prism. Cecily!

Chasuble. My child! my child! [**Cecily** goes towards **Jack**; he kisses her brow in a melancholy manner.]

Cecily. What is the matter, Uncle Jack? Do look happy! You look as if you had toothache, and I have got such a surprise for you. Who do you think is in the dining-room? Your brother!

Jack. Who?

Cecily. Your brother Ernest. He arrived about half an hour ago.

Jack. What nonsense! I haven't got a brother.

Cecily. Oh, don't say that. However badly he may have behaved to you in the past he is still your brother. You couldn't be so heartless as to disown him. I'll tell him to come out. And you will shake hands with him, won't you, Uncle Jack? [Runs back into the house.]

Chasuble. These are very joyful tidings.

Miss Prism. After we had all been resigned to his loss, his sudden return seems to me peculiarly distressing.

Jack. My brother is in the dining-room? I don't know what it all means. I think it is perfectly absurd.

[Enter **Algernon** and **Cecily** hand in hand. They come slowly up to **Jack**.]

Jack. Good heavens! [Motions **Algernon** away.]

Algernon. Brother John, I have come down from town to tell you that I am very sorry for all the trouble I have given you, and that I intend to lead a better life in the future. [**Jack** glares at him and does not take his hand.]

Cecily. Uncle Jack, you are not going to refuse your own brother's hand?

Jack. Nothing will induce me to take his hand. I think his coming down here disgraceful. He knows perfectly well why.

Cecily. Uncle Jack, do be nice. There is some good in every one. Ernest has just been telling me about his poor invalid friend Mr. Bunbury whom he goes to visit so often. And surely there must be much good in one who is kind to an invalid, and leaves the pleasures of London to sit by a bed of pain.

Jack. Oh! he has been talking about Bunbury, has he?

Cecily. Yes, he has told me all about poor Mr. Bunbury, and his terrible state of health.

Jack. Bunbury! Well, I won't have him talk to you about Bunbury or about anything else. It is enough to drive one perfectly frantic.

Algernon. Of course I admit that the faults were all on my side. But I must say that I think that Brother John's coldness to me is peculiarly painful. I expected a more enthusiastic welcome, especially considering it is the first time I have come here.

Cecily. Uncle Jack, if you don't shake hands with Ernest I will never forgive you.

Jack. Never forgive me?

Cecily. Never, never, never!

Jack. Well, this is the last time I shall ever do it. [Shakes with **Algernon** and glares.]

Chasuble. It's pleasant, is it not, to see so perfect a reconciliation? I think we might leave the two brothers together.

Miss Prism. Cecily, you will come with us.

Cecily. Certainly, Miss Prism. My little task of reconciliation is over.

Chasuble. You have done a beautiful action to-day, dear child.

Miss Prism. We must not be premature in our judgments.

Cecily. I feel very happy. [They all go off except **Jack** and **Algernon**.]

Jack. You young scoundrel, Algy, you must get out of this place as soon as possible. I don't allow any Bunburying here.

[Enter **Merriman**.]

Merriman. I have put Mr. Ernest's things in the room next to yours, sir. I suppose that is all right?

Jack. What?

Merriman. Mr. Ernest's luggage, sir. I have unpacked it and put it in the room next to your own.

Jack. His luggage?

Merriman. Yes, sir. Three portmanteaus, a dressing-case, two hat-boxes, and a large luncheon-basket.

Algernon. I am afraid I can't stay more than a week this time.

Jack. Merriman, order the dog-cart[12] at once. Mr. Ernest has been suddenly called back to town.

Merriman. Yes, sir. [Goes back into the house.]

Algernon. What a fearful liar you are, Jack. I have not been called back to town at all.

Jack. Yes, you have.

Algernon. I haven't heard any one call me.

Jack. Your duty as a gentleman calls you back.

Algernon. My duty as a gentleman has never interfered with my pleasures in the smallest degree.

Jack. I can quite understand that.

Algernon. Well, Cecily is a darling.

Jack. You are not to talk of Miss Cardew like that. I don't like it.

Algernon. Well, I don't like your clothes. You look perfectly ridiculous in them. Why on earth don't you go up and change? It is perfectly childish to be in deep mourning for a man who is actually staying for a whole week with you in your house as a guest. I call it grotesque.

Jack. You are certainly not staying with me for a whole week as a guest or anything else. You have got to leave . . . by the four-five train.

Algernon. I certainly won't leave you so long as you are in mourning. It would be most unfriendly. If I were in mourning you would stay with me, I suppose. I should think it very unkind if you didn't.

Jack. Well, will you go if I change my clothes?

12. A light, horse-drawn carriage, with a box for carrying dogs, originally used for hunting.

Algernon. Yes, if you are not too long. I never saw anybody take so long to dress, and with such little result.

Jack. Well, at any rate, that is better than being always over-dressed as you are.

Algernon. If I am occasionally a little over-dressed, I make up for it by being always immensely over-educated.

Jack. Your vanity is ridiculous, your conduct an outrage, and your presence in my garden utterly absurd. However, you have got to catch the four-five, and I hope you will have a pleasant journey back to town. This Bunburying, as you call it, has not been a great success for you.

[Goes into the house.]

Algernon. I think it has been a great success. I'm in love with Cecily, and that is everything.

[Enter **Cecily** at the back of the garden. She picks up the can and begins to water the flowers.] But I must see her before I go, and make arrangements for another Bunbury. Ah, there she is.

Cecily. Oh, I merely came back to water the roses. I thought you were with Uncle Jack.

Algernon. He's gone to order the dog-cart for me.

Cecily. Oh, is he going to take you for a nice drive?

Algernon. He's going to send me away.

Cecily. Then have we got to part?

Algernon. I am afraid so. It's a very painful parting.

Cecily. It is always painful to part from people whom one has known for a very brief space of time. The absence of old friends one can endure with equanimity. But even a momentary separation from anyone to whom one has just been introduced is almost unbearable.

Algernon. Thank you.

[Enter **Merriman**.]

Merriman. The dog-cart is at the door, sir. [**Algernon** looks appealingly at **Cecily**.]

Cecily. It can wait, Merriman for . . . five minutes.

Merriman. Yes, Miss. [Exit **Merriman**.]

Algernon. I hope, Cecily, I shall not offend you if I state quite frankly and openly that you seem to me to be in every way the visible personification of absolute perfection.

Cecily. I think your frankness does you great credit, Ernest. If you will allow me, I will copy your remarks into my diary. [Goes over to table and begins writing in diary.]

Algernon. Do you really keep a diary? I'd give anything to look at it. May I?

Cecily. Oh no. [Puts her hand over it.] You see, it is simply a very young girl's record of her own thoughts and impressions, and consequently meant for publication. When it appears in volume form I hope you will order a copy. But pray, Ernest, don't stop. I delight in taking down from dictation. I have reached 'absolute perfection'. You can go on. I am quite ready for more.

Algernon. [Somewhat taken aback.] Ahem! Ahem!

Cecily. Oh, don't cough, Ernest. When one is dictating one should speak fluently and not cough. Besides, I don't know how to spell a cough. [Writes as **Algernon** speaks.]

Algernon. [Speaking very rapidly.] Cecily, ever since I first looked upon your wonderful and incomparable beauty, I have dared to love you wildly, passionately, devotedly, hopelessly.

Cecily. I don't think that you should tell me that you love me wildly, passionately, devotedly, hopelessly. Hopelessly doesn't seem to make much sense, does it?

Algernon. Cecily!

[Enter **Merriman**.]

Merriman. The dog-cart is waiting, sir.

Algernon. Tell it to come round next week, at the same hour.

Merriman. [Looks at **Cecily**, who makes no sign.] Yes, sir.

[**Merriman** retires.]

Cecily. Uncle Jack would be very much annoyed if he knew you were staying on till next week, at the same hour.

Algernon. Oh, I don't care about Jack. I don't care for anybody in the whole world but you. I love you, Cecily. You will marry me, won't you?

Cecily. You silly boy! Of course. Why, we have been engaged for the last three months.

Algernon. For the last three months?

Cecily. Yes, it will be exactly three months on Thursday.

Algernon. But how did we become engaged?

Cecily. Well, ever since dear Uncle Jack first confessed to us that he had a younger brother who was very wicked and bad, you of course have formed the chief topic of conversation between myself and Miss Prism. And of course a man who is much talked about is always very attractive. One feels there must be something in him, after all. I daresay it was foolish of me, but I fell in love with you, Ernest.

Algernon. Darling! And when was the engagement actually settled?

Cecily. On the 14th of February last. Worn out by your entire ignorance of my existence, I determined to end the matter one way or the other, and after a long struggle with myself I accepted you under this dear old tree here. The next day I bought this little ring in your name, and this is the little bangle with the true lover's knot I promised you always to wear.

Algernon. Did I give you this? It's very pretty, isn't it?

Cecily. Yes, you've wonderfully good taste, Ernest. It's the excuse I've always given for your leading such a bad life. And this is the box in which I keep all your dear letters. [Kneels at table, opens box, and produces letters tied up with blue ribbon.]

Algernon. My letters! But, my own sweet Cecily, I have never written you any letters.

Cecily. You need hardly remind me of that, Ernest. I remember only too well that I was forced to write your letters for you. I wrote always three times a week, and sometimes oftener.

Algernon. Oh, do let me read them, Cecily?

Cecily. Oh, I couldn't possibly. They would make you far too conceited. [Replaces box.] The three you wrote me after I had broken off the engagement are so beautiful, and so badly spelled, that even now I can hardly read them without crying a little.

Algernon. But was our engagement ever broken off?

Cecily. Of course it was. On the 22nd of last March. You can see the entry if you like. [Shows diary.] 'To-day I broke off my engagement with Ernest. I feel it is better to do so. The weather still continues charming.'

Algernon. But why on earth did you break it off? What had I done? I had done nothing at all. Cecily, I am very much hurt indeed to hear you broke it off. Particularly when the weather was so charming.

Cecily. It would hardly have been a really serious engagement if it hadn't been broken off at least once. But I forgave you before the week was out.

Algernon. [Crossing to her, and kneeling.] What a perfect angel you are, Cecily.

Cecily. You dear romantic boy. [He kisses her, she puts her fingers through his hair.] I hope your hair curls naturally, does it?

Algernon. Yes, darling, with a little help from others.

Cecily. I am so glad.

Algernon. You'll never break off our engagement again, Cecily?

Cecily. I don't think I could break it off now that I have actually met you. Besides, of course, there is the question of your name.

Algernon. Yes, of course. [Nervously.]

Cecily. You must not laugh at me, darling, but it had always been a girlish dream of mine to love some one whose name was Ernest. [**Algernon** rises, **Cecily** also.] There is something in that name that seems to inspire absolute confidence. I pity any poor married woman whose husband is not called Ernest.

Algernon. But, my dear child, do you mean to say you could not love me if I had some other name?

Cecily. But what name?

Algernon. Oh, any name you like—Algernon—for instance . . .

Cecily. But I don't like the name of Algernon.

Algernon. Well, my own dear, sweet, loving little darling, I really can't see why you should object to the name of Algernon. It is not at all a bad name. In fact, it is rather an aristocratic name. Half of the chaps who get into the Bankruptcy Court are called Algernon. But seriously, Cecily . . . [Moving to her] . . . if my name was Algy, couldn't you love me?

Cecily. [Rising.] I might respect you, Ernest, I might admire your character, but I fear that I should not be able to give you my undivided attention.

Algernon. Ahem! Cecily! [Picking up hat.] Your Rector here is, I suppose, thoroughly experienced in the practice of all the rites and ceremonials of the Church?

Cecily. Oh, yes. Dr. Chasuble is a most learned man. He has never written a single book, so you can imagine how much he knows.

Algernon. I must see him at once on a most important christening—I mean on most important business.

Cecily. Oh!

Algernon. I shan't be away more than half an hour.

Cecily. Considering that we have been engaged since February the 14th, and that I only met you to-day for the first time, I think it is rather hard that you should leave me for so long a period as half an hour. Couldn't you make it twenty minutes?

Algernon. I'll be back in no time.

[Kisses her and rushes down the garden.]

Cecily. What an impetuous boy he is! I like his hair so much. I must enter his proposal in my diary.

[Enter **Merriman**.]

Merriman. A Miss Fairfax has just called to see Mr. Worthing. On very important business, Miss Fairfax states.

Cecily. Isn't Mr. Worthing in his library?

Merriman. Mr. Worthing went over in the direction of the Rectory some time ago.

Cecily. Pray ask the lady to come out here; Mr. Worthing is sure to be back soon. And you can bring tea.

Merriman. Yes, Miss. [Goes out.]

Cecily. Miss Fairfax! I suppose one of the many good elderly women who are associated with Uncle Jack in some of his philanthropic work in London. I don't quite like women who are interested in philanthropic work. I think it is so forward of them.

[Enter **Merriman**.]

Merriman. Miss Fairfax.

[Enter **Gwendolen**.]

[Exit **Merriman**.]

Cecily. [Advancing to meet her.] Pray let me introduce myself to you. My name is Cecily Cardew.

Gwendolen. Cecily Cardew? [Moving to her and shaking hands.] What a very sweet name! Something tells me that we are going to be great friends. I like you already more than I can say. My first impressions of people are never wrong.

Cecily. How nice of you to like me so much after we have known each other such a comparatively short time. Pray sit down.

Gwendolen. [Still standing up.] I may call you Cecily, may I not?

Cecily. With pleasure!

Gwendolen. And you will always call me Gwendolen, won't you?

Cecily. If you wish.

Gwendolen. Then that is all quite settled, is it not?

Cecily. I hope so. [A pause. They both sit down together.]

Gwendolen. Perhaps this might be a favourable opportunity for my mentioning who I am. My father is Lord Bracknell. You have never heard of papa, I suppose?

Cecily. I don't think so.

Gwendolen. Outside the family circle, papa, I am glad to say, is entirely unknown. I think that is quite as it should be. The home seems to me to be the proper sphere for the man. And certainly once a man begins to neglect his domestic duties he becomes painfully effeminate, does he not? And I don't like that. It makes men so very attractive. Cecily, mamma, whose views on education are remarkably strict, has brought me up to be extremely short-sighted; it is part of her system; so do you mind my looking at you through my glasses?

Cecily. Oh! not at all, Gwendolen. I am very fond of being looked at.

Gwendolen. [After examining **Cecily** carefully through a lorgnette.] You are here on a short visit, I suppose.

Cecily. Oh no! I live here.

Gwendolen. [Severely.] Really? Your mother, no doubt, or some female relative of advanced years, resides here also?

Cecily. Oh no! I have no mother, nor, in fact, any relations.

Gwendolen. Indeed?

Cecily. My dear guardian, with the assistance of Miss Prism, has the arduous task of looking after me.

Gwendolen. Your guardian?

Cecily. Yes, I am Mr. Worthing's ward.

Gwendolen. Oh! It is strange he never mentioned to me that he had a ward. How secretive of him! He grows more interesting hourly. I am not sure, however, that the news inspires me with feelings of unmixed delight. [Rising and going to her.] I am very fond of you, Cecily; I have liked you ever since I met you! But I am bound to state that now that I know that you are Mr. Worthing's ward, I cannot help expressing a wish you were—well, just a little older than you seem to be—and not quite so very alluring in appearance. In fact, if I may speak candidly—

Cecily. Pray do! I think that whenever one has anything unpleasant to say, one should always be quite candid.

Gwendolen. Well, to speak with perfect candour, Cecily, I wish that you were fully forty-two, and more than usually plain for your age. Ernest has a strong upright nature. He is the very soul of truth and honour. Disloyalty would be as impossible to him as deception. But even men of the noblest possible moral character are extremely susceptible to the influence of the physical charms of others. Modern, no less than Ancient History, supplies us with many most painful examples of what I refer to. If it were not so, indeed, History would be quite unreadable.

Cecily. I beg your pardon, Gwendolen, did you say Ernest?

Gwendolen. Yes.

Cecily. Oh, but it is not Mr. Ernest Worthing who is my guardian. It is his brother—his elder brother.

Gwendolen. [Sitting down again.] Ernest never mentioned to me that he had a brother.

Cecily. I am sorry to say they have not been on good terms for a long time.

Gwendolen. Ah! that accounts for it. And now that I think of it I have never heard any man mention his brother. The subject seems distasteful to most men. Cecily, you have lifted a load from my mind. I was growing almost anxious. It would have been terrible if any cloud had come across a friendship like ours, would it not? Of course you are quite, quite sure that it is not Mr. Ernest Worthing who is your guardian?

Cecily. Quite sure. [A pause.] In fact, I am going to be his.

Gwendolen. [Inquiringly.] I beg your pardon?

Cecily. [Rather shy and confidingly.] Dearest Gwendolen, there is no reason why I should make a secret of it to you. Our little county newspaper is sure to chronicle the fact next week. Mr. Ernest Worthing and I are engaged to be married.

Gwendolen. [Quite politely, rising.] My darling Cecily, I think there must be some slight error. Mr. Ernest Worthing is engaged to me. The announcement will appear in the *Morning Post* on Saturday at the latest.

Cecily. [Very politely, rising.] I am afraid you must be under some misconception. Ernest proposed to me exactly ten minutes ago. [Shows diary.]

Gwendolen. [Examines diary through her lorgnettte carefully.] It is certainly very curious, for he asked me to be his wife yesterday afternoon at 5.30. If you would care to verify the incident, pray do so. [Produces diary of her own.] I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train. I am so sorry, dear Cecily, if it is any disappointment to you, but I am afraid I have the prior claim.

Cecily. It would distress me more than I can tell you, dear Gwendolen, if it caused you any mental or physical anguish, but I feel bound to point out that since Ernest proposed to you he clearly has changed his mind.

Gwendolen. [Meditatively.] If the poor fellow has been entrapped into any foolish promise I shall consider it my duty to rescue him at once, and with a firm hand.

Cecily. [Thoughtfully and sadly.] Whatever unfortunate entanglement my dear boy may have got into, I will never reproach him with it after we are married.

Gwendolen. Do you allude to me, Miss Cardew, as an entanglement? You are presumptuous. On an occasion of this kind it becomes more than a moral duty to speak one's mind. It becomes a pleasure.

Cecily. Do you suggest, Miss Fairfax, that I entrapped Ernest into an engagement? How dare you? This is no time for wearing the shallow mask of manners. When I see a spade I call it a spade.

Gwendolen. [Satirically.] I am glad to say that I have never seen a spade. It is obvious that our social spheres have been widely different.

[Enter **Merriman**, followed by the footman. He carries a salver, table cloth, and plate stand. **Cecily** is about to retort. The presence of the servants exercises a restraining influence, under which both girls chafe.]

Merriman. Shall I lay tea here as usual, Miss?

Cecily. [Sternly, in a calm voice.] Yes, as usual. [**Merriman** begins to clear table and lay cloth. A long pause. **Cecily** and **Gwendolen** glare at each other.]

Gwendolen. Are there many interesting walks in the vicinity, Miss Cardew?

Cecily. Oh! yes! a great many. From the top of one of the hills quite close one can see five counties.

Gwendolen. Five counties! I don't think I should like that; I hate crowds.

Cecily. [Sweetly.] I suppose that is why you live in town? [**Gwendolen** bites her lip, and beats her foot nervously with her parasol.]

Gwendolen. [Looking round.] Quite a well-kept garden this is, Miss Cardew.

Cecily. So glad you like it, Miss Fairfax.

Gwendolen. I had no idea there were any flowers in the country.

Cecily. Oh, flowers are as common here, Miss Fairfax, as people are in London.

Gwendolen. Personally I cannot understand how anybody manages to exist in the country, if anybody who is anybody does. The country always bores me to death.

Cecily. Ah! This is what the newspapers call agricultural depression[13], is it not? I believe the aristocracy are suffering very much from it just at present. It is almost an epidemic amongst them, I have been told. May I offer you some tea, Miss Fairfax?

Gwendolen. [With elaborate politeness.] Thank you. [Aside.] Detestable girl! But I require tea!

Cecily. [Sweetly.] Sugar?

Gwendolen. [Superciliously.] No, thank you. Sugar is not fashionable any more. [**Cecily** looks angrily at her, takes up the tongs and puts four lumps of sugar into the cup.]

Cecily. [Severely.] Cake or bread and butter?

Gwendolen. [In a bored manner.] Bread and butter, please. Cake is rarely seen at the best houses nowadays.

Cecily. [Cuts a very large slice of cake, and puts it on the tray.] Hand that to Miss Fairfax.

[**Merriman** does so, and goes out with footman. **Gwendolen** drinks the tea and makes a grimace. Puts down cup at once, reaches out her hand to the bread and butter, looks at it, and finds it is cake. Rises in indignation.]

Gwendolen. You have filled my tea with lumps of sugar, and though I asked most distinctly for bread and butter, you have given me cake. I am known for the gentleness of my disposition, and the extraordinary sweetness of my nature, but I warn you, Miss Cardew, you may go too far.

Cecily. [Rising.] To save my poor, innocent, trusting boy from the machinations of any other girl there are no lengths to which I would not go.

Gwendolen. From the moment I saw you I distrusted you. I felt that you were false and deceitful. I am never deceived in such matters. My first impressions of people are invariably right.

Cecily. It seems to me, Miss Fairfax, that I am trespassing on your valuable time. No doubt you have many other calls of a similar character to make in the neighbourhood.

[Enter **Jack**.]

Gwendolen. [Catching sight of him.] Ernest! My own Ernest!

Jack. Gwendolen! Darling! [Offers to kiss her.]

Gwendolen. [Draws back.] A moment! May I ask if you are engaged to be married to this young lady? [Points to **Cecily**.]

Jack. [Laughing.] To dear little Cecily! Of course not! What could have put such an idea into your pretty little head?

Gwendolen. Thank you. You may! [Offers her cheek.]

Cecily. [Very sweetly.] I knew there must be some misunderstanding, Miss Fairfax. The gentleman whose arm is at present round your waist is my guardian, Mr. John Worthing.

Gwendolen. I beg your pardon?

Cecily. This is Uncle Jack.

Gwendolen. [Receding.] Jack! Oh!

[Enter **Algernon**.]

Cecily. Here is Ernest.

Algernon. [Goes straight over to **Cecily** without noticing any one else.] My own love! [Offers to kiss her.]

13. A period of economic adversity in agriculture from the mid-1870s to the mid-1890s.

Cecily. [Drawing back.] A moment, Ernest! May I ask you—are you engaged to be married to this young lady?

Algernon. [Looking round.] To what young lady? Good heavens! Gwendolen!

Cecily. Yes! to good heavens, Gwendolen, I mean to Gwendolen.

Algernon. [Laughing.] Of course not! What could have put such an idea into your pretty little head?

Cecily. Thank you. [Presenting her cheek to be kissed.] You may. [**Algernon** kisses her.]

Gwendolen. I felt there was some slight error, Miss Cardew. The gentleman who is now embracing you is my cousin, Mr. Algernon Moncrieff.

Cecily. [Breaking away from **Algernon**.] Algernon Moncrieff! Oh! [The two girls move towards each other and put their arms round each other's waists as if for protection.]

Cecily. Are you called Algernon?

Algernon. I cannot deny it.

Cecily. Oh!

Gwendolen. Is your name really John?

Jack. [Standing rather proudly.] I could deny it if I liked. I could deny anything if I liked. But my name certainly is John. It has been John for years.

Cecily. [To **Gwendolen**.] A gross deception has been practised on both of us.

Gwendolen. My poor wounded Cecily!

Cecily. My sweet wronged Gwendolen!

Gwendolen. [Slowly and seriously.] You will call me sister, will you not? [They embrace. **Jack** and **Algernon** groan and walk up and down.]

Cecily. [Rather brightly.] There is just one question I would like to be allowed to ask my guardian.

Gwendolen. An admirable idea! Mr. Worthing, there is just one question I would like to be permitted to put to you. Where is your brother Ernest? We are both engaged to be married to your brother Ernest, so it is a matter of some importance to us to know where your brother Ernest is at present.

Jack. [Slowly and hesitatingly.] Gwendolen—Cecily—it is very painful for me to be forced to speak the truth. It is the first time in my life that I have ever been reduced to such a painful position, and I am really quite inexperienced in doing anything of the kind. However, I will tell you quite frankly that I have no brother Ernest. I have no brother at all. I never had a brother in my life, and I certainly have not the smallest intention of ever having one in the future.

Cecily. [Surprised.] No brother at all?

Jack. [Cheerily.] None!

Gwendolen. [Severely.] Had you never a brother of any kind?

Jack. [Pleasantly.] Never. Not even of an kind.

Gwendolen. I am afraid it is quite clear, Cecily, that neither of us is engaged to be married to any one.

Cecily. It is not a very pleasant position for a young girl suddenly to find herself in. Is it?

Gwendolen. Let us go into the house. They will hardly venture to come after us there.

Cecily. No, men are so cowardly, aren't they?

[They retire into the house with scornful looks.]

Jack. This ghastly state of things is what you call Bunburying, I suppose?

Algernon. Yes, and a perfectly wonderful Bunbury it is. The most wonderful Bunbury I have ever had in my life.

Jack. Well, you've no right whatsoever to Bunbury here.

Algernon. That is absurd. One has a right to Bunbury anywhere one chooses. Every serious Bunburyist knows that.

Jack. Serious Bunburyist! Good heavens!

Algernon. Well, one must be serious about something, if one wants to have any amusement in life. I happen to be serious about Bunburying. What on earth you are serious about I haven't got the remotest idea. About everything, I should fancy. You have such an absolutely trivial nature.

Jack. Well, the only small satisfaction I have in the whole of this wretched business is that your friend Bunbury is quite exploded. You won't be able to run down to the country quite so often as you used to do, dear Algy. And a very good thing too.

Algernon. Your brother is a little off colour, isn't he, dear Jack? You won't be able to disappear to London quite so frequently as your wicked custom was. And not a bad thing either.

Jack. As for your conduct towards Miss Cardew, I must say that your taking in a sweet, simple, innocent girl like that is quite inexcusable. To say nothing of the fact that she is my ward.

Algernon. I can see no possible defence at all for your deceiving a brilliant, clever, thoroughly experienced young lady like Miss Fairfax. To say nothing of the fact that she is my cousin.

Jack. I wanted to be engaged to Gwendolen, that is all. I love her.

Algernon. Well, I simply wanted to be engaged to Cecily. I adore her.

Jack. There is certainly no chance of your marrying Miss Cardew.

Algernon. I don't think there is much likelihood, Jack, of you and Miss Fairfax being united.

Jack. Well, that is no business of yours.

Algernon. If it was my business, I wouldn't talk about it. [Begins to eat muffins.] It is very vulgar to talk about one's business. Only people like stock-brokers do that, and then merely at dinner parties.

Jack. How can you sit there, calmly eating muffins when we are in this horrible trouble, I can't make out. You seem to me to be perfectly heartless.

Algernon. Well, I can't eat muffins in an agitated manner. The butter would probably get on my cuffs. One should always eat muffins quite calmly. It is the only way to eat them.

Jack. I say it's perfectly heartless your eating muffins at all, under the circumstances.

Algernon. When I am in trouble, eating is the only thing that consoles me. Indeed, when I am in really great trouble, as any one who knows me intimately will tell you, I refuse everything except food and drink. At the present moment I am eating muffins because I am unhappy. Besides, I am particularly fond of muffins. [Rising.]

Jack. [Rising.] Well, that is no reason why you should eat them all in that greedy way. [Takes muffins from **Algernon**.]

Algernon. [Offering tea-cake.] I wish you would have tea-cake instead. I don't like tea-cake.

Jack. Good heavens! I suppose a man may eat his own muffins in his own garden.

Algernon. But you have just said it was perfectly heartless to eat muffins.

Jack. I said it was perfectly heartless of you, under the circumstances. That is a very different thing.

Algernon. That may be. But the muffins are the same. [He seizes the muffin-dish from **Jack**.]

Jack. Algy, I wish to goodness you would go.

Algernon. You can't possibly ask me to go without having some dinner. It's absurd. I never go without my dinner. No one ever does, except vegetarians and people like that. Besides I have just made arrangements with Dr. Chasuble to be christened at a quarter to six under the name of Ernest.

Jack. My dear fellow, the sooner you give up that nonsense the better. I made arrangements this morning with Dr. Chasuble to be christened myself at 5.30, and I naturally will take the name of Ernest. Gwendolen would wish it. We can't both be christened Ernest. It's absurd. Besides, I have a perfect right to be christened if I like. There is no evidence at all that I have ever been christened by anybody. I should think it extremely probable I never was, and so does Dr. Chasuble. It is entirely different in your case. You have been christened already.

Algernon. Yes, but I have not been christened for years.

Jack. Yes, but you have been christened. That is the important thing.

Algernon. Quite so. So I know my constitution can stand it. If you are not quite sure about your ever having been christened, I must say I think it rather dangerous your venturing on it now. It might make you very unwell. You can hardly have forgotten that some one very closely connected with you was very nearly carried off this week in Paris by a severe chill.

Jack. Yes, but you said yourself that a severe chill was not hereditary.

Algernon. It usen't to be, I know—but I daresay it is now. Science is always making wonderful improvements in things.

Jack. [Picking up the muffin-dish.] Oh, that is nonsense; you are always talking nonsense.

Algernon. Jack, you are at the muffins again! I wish you wouldn't. There are only two left. [Takes them.] I told you I was particularly fond of muffins.

Jack. But I hate tea-cake.

Algernon. Why on earth then do you allow tea-cake to be served up for your guests? What ideas you have of hospitality!

Jack. Algernon! I have already told you to go. I don't want you here. Why don't you go!

Algernon. I haven't quite finished my tea yet! and there is still one muffin left. [**Jack** groans, and sinks into a chair. **Algernon** still continues eating.]

ACT DROP

62.

The Importance of Being Earnest: Act III

Oscar Wilde

THIRD ACT

SCENE

Morning-room[1] at the Manor House.

[**Gwendolen** and **Cecily** are at the window, looking out into the garden.]

Gwendolen. The fact that they did not follow us at once into the house, as any one else would have done, seems to me to show that they have some sense of shame left.

Cecily. They have been eating muffins. That looks like repentance.

Gwendolen. [After a pause.] They don't seem to notice us at all. Couldn't you cough?

Cecily. But I haven't got a cough.

Gwendolen. They're looking at us. What effrontery!

Cecily. They're approaching. That's very forward of them.

Gwendolen. Let us preserve a dignified silence.

Cecily. Certainly. It's the only thing to do now. [Enter **Jack** followed by **Algernon**. They whistle some dreadful popular air from a British Opera[2].]

Gwendolen. This dignified silence seems to produce an unpleasant effect.

Cecily. A most distasteful one.

Gwendolen. But we will not be the first to speak.

Cecily. Certainly not.

Gwendolen. Mr. Worthing, I have something very particular to ask you. Much depends on your reply.

Cecily. Gwendolen, your common sense is invaluable. Mr. Moncrieff, kindly answer me the following question. Why did you pretend to be my guardian's brother?

Algernon. In order that I might have an opportunity of meeting you.

Cecily. [To **Gwendolen**.] That certainly seems a satisfactory explanation, does it not?

Gwendolen. Yes, dear, if you can believe him.

Cecily. I don't. But that does not affect the wonderful beauty of his answer.

Gwendolen. True. In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity is the vital thing. Mr. Worthing, what explanation can you offer to me for pretending to have a brother? Was it in order that you might have an opportunity of coming up to town to see me as often as possible?

Jack. Can you doubt it, Miss Fairfax?

Gwendolen. I have the gravest doubts upon the subject. But I intend to crush them. This is

1. A room used as a sitting room during the morning. Later in the day, visitors were received in the more formal drawing room.
2. Probably referring to a tune from an operetta by Gilbert and Sullivan. They had spoofed Wilde and the Aesthetic Movement in *Patience* (1881). According to one character in the operetta, to be deemed an aesthete, one must "lie upon the daisies, and discourse in novel phrases of your complicated state of mind,/The meaning doesn't matter if it's only idle chatter of a transcendental kind."

not the moment for German scepticism[3]. [Moving to **Cecily**.] Their explanations appear to be quite satisfactory, especially Mr. Worthing's. That seems to me to have the stamp of truth upon it.

Cecily. I am more than content with what Mr. Moncrieff said. His voice alone inspires one with absolute credulity.

Gwendolen. Then you think we should forgive them?

Cecily. Yes. I mean no.

Gwendolen. True! I had forgotten. There are principles at stake that one cannot surrender. Which of us should tell them? The task is not a pleasant one.

Cecily. Could we not both speak at the same time?

Gwendolen. An excellent idea! I nearly always speak at the same time as other people. Will you take the time from me?

Cecily. Certainly. [**Gwendolen** beats time with uplifted finger.]

Gwendolen and **Cecily** [Speaking together.] Your Christian names are still an insuperable barrier. That is all!

Jack and **Algernon** [Speaking together.] Our Christian names! Is that all? But we are going to be christened this afternoon.

Gwendolen. [To **Jack**.] For my sake you are prepared to do this terrible thing?

Jack. I am.

Cecily. [To **Algernon**.] To please me you are ready to face this fearful ordeal?

Algernon. I am!

Gwendolen. How absurd to talk of the equality of the sexes! Where questions of self-sacrifice are concerned, men are infinitely beyond us.

Jack. We are. [Clasps hands with **Algernon**.]

Cecily. They have moments of physical courage of which we women know absolutely nothing.

Gwendolen. [To **Jack**.] Darling!

Algernon. [To **Cecily**.] Darling! [They fall into each other's arms.]

[Enter **Merriman**. When he enters he coughs loudly, seeing the situation.]

Merriman. Ahem! Ahem! Lady Bracknell!

Jack. Good heavens!

[Enter **Lady Bracknell**. The couples separate in alarm. Exit **Merriman**.]

Lady Bracknell. Gwendolen! What does this mean?

Gwendolen. Merely that I am engaged to be married to Mr. Worthing, mamma.

Lady Bracknell. Come here. Sit down. Sit down immediately. Hesitation of any kind is a sign of mental decay in the young, of physical weakness in the old. [Turns to **Jack**.] Apprised, sir, of my daughter's sudden flight by her trusty maid, whose confidence I purchased by means of a small coin, I followed her at once by a luggage train. Her unhappy father is, I am glad to say, under the impression that she is attending a more than usually lengthy lecture by the University Extension Scheme on the Influence of a permanent income on Thought. I do not propose to undeceive him. Indeed I have never undeceived him on any question. I would consider it wrong. But of course, you will clearly understand that all communication between yourself and my daughter must cease immediately from this moment. On this point, as indeed on all points, I am firm.

Jack. I am engaged to be married to Gwendolen Lady Bracknell!

Lady Bracknell. You are nothing of the kind, sir. And now, as regards Algernon! . . . Algernon!

Algernon. Yes, Aunt Augusta.

Lady Bracknell. May I ask if it is in this house that your invalid friend Mr. Bunbury resides?

3. A reference to 19th-century German scholarship that raised doubts about the truth of the Bible.

Algernon. [Stammering.] Oh! No! Bunbury doesn't live here. Bunbury is somewhere else at present. In fact, Bunbury is dead.

Lady Bracknell. Dead! When did Mr. Bunbury die? His death must have been extremely sudden.

Algernon. [Airily.] Oh! I killed Bunbury this afternoon. I mean poor Bunbury died this afternoon.

Lady Bracknell. What did he die of?

Algernon. Bunbury? Oh, he was quite exploded.

Lady Bracknell. Exploded! Was he the victim of a revolutionary outrage? I was not aware that Mr. Bunbury was interested in social legislation. If so, he is well punished for his morbidity.

Algernon. My dear Aunt Augusta, I mean he was found out! The doctors found out that Bunbury could not live, that is what I mean—so Bunbury died.

Lady Bracknell. He seems to have had great confidence in the opinion of his physicians. I am glad, however, that he made up his mind at the last to some definite course of action, and acted under proper medical advice. And now that we have finally got rid of this Mr. Bunbury, may I ask, Mr. Worthing, who is that young person whose hand my nephew Algernon is now holding in what seems to me a peculiarly unnecessary manner?

Jack. That lady is Miss Cecily Cardew, my ward. [**Lady Bracknell** bows coldly to **Cecily**.]

Algernon. I am engaged to be married to Cecily, Aunt Augusta.

Lady Bracknell. I beg your pardon?

Cecily. Mr. Moncrieff and I are engaged to be married, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. [With a shiver, crossing to the sofa and sitting down.] I do not know whether there is anything peculiarly exciting in the air of this particular part of Hertfordshire, but the number of engagements that go on seems to me considerably above the proper average that statistics have laid down for our guidance. I think some preliminary inquiry on my part would not be out of place. Mr. Worthing, is Miss Cardew at all connected with any of the larger railway stations in London? I merely desire information. Until yesterday I had no idea that there were any families or persons whose origin was a Terminus. [**Jack** looks perfectly furious, but restrains himself.]

Jack. [In a clear, cold voice.] Miss Cardew is the grand-daughter of the late Mr. Thomas Cardew of 149 Belgrave Square, S.W.; Gervase Park, Dorking, Surrey; and the Sporran, Fifeshire, N.B.

Lady Bracknell. That sounds not unsatisfactory. Three addresses always inspire confidence, even in tradesmen. But what proof have I of their authenticity?

Jack. I have carefully preserved the Court Guides[4] of the period. They are open to your inspection, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. [Grimly.] I have known strange errors in that publication.

Jack. Miss Cardew's family solicitors are Messrs. Markby, Markby, and Markby.

Lady Bracknell. Markby, Markby, and Markby? A firm of the very highest position in their profession. Indeed I am told that one of the Mr. Markby's is occasionally to be seen at dinner parties. So far I am satisfied.

Jack. [Very irritably.] How extremely kind of you, Lady Bracknell! I have also in my possession, you will be pleased to hear, certificates of Miss Cardew's birth, baptism, whooping cough, registration, vaccination, confirmation, and the measles; both the German and the English variety.

Lady Bracknell. Ah! A life crowded with incident, I see; though perhaps somewhat too exciting for a young girl. I am not myself in favour of premature experiences. [Rises, looks at her watch.] Gwendolen! the time approaches for our departure. We have not a moment to lose. As a matter of form, Mr. Worthing, I had better ask you if Miss Cardew has any little fortune?

4. An annual publication listing the names and London addresses of British royalty, aristocracy, and gentry.

Jack. Oh! about a hundred and thirty thousand pounds in the Funds[5]. That is all. Goodbye, Lady Bracknell. So pleased to have seen you.

Lady Bracknell. [Sitting down again.] A moment, Mr. Worthing. A hundred and thirty thousand pounds! And in the Funds! Miss Cardew seems to me a most attractive young lady, now that I look at her. Few girls of the present day have any really solid qualities, any of the qualities that last, and improve with time. We live, I regret to say, in an age of surfaces. [To **Cecily**.] Come over here, dear. [**Cecily** goes across.] Pretty child! your dress is sadly simple, and your hair seems almost as Nature might have left it. But we can soon alter all that. A thoroughly experienced French maid produces a really marvellous result in a very brief space of time. I remember recommending one to young Lady Lancing, and after three months her own husband did not know her.

Jack. And after six months nobody knew her.

Lady Bracknell. [Glares at **Jack** for a few moments. Then bends, with a practised smile, to **Cecily**.] Kindly turn round, sweet child. [**Cecily** turns completely round.] No, the side view is what I want. [**Cecily** presents her profile.] Yes, quite as I expected. There are distinct social possibilities in your profile. The two weak points in our age are its want of principle and its want of profile. The chin a little higher, dear. Style largely depends on the way the chin is worn. They are worn very high, just at present. Algernon!

Algernon. Yes, Aunt Augusta!

Lady Bracknell. There are distinct social possibilities in Miss Cardew's profile.

Algernon. Cecily is the sweetest, dearest, prettiest girl in the whole world. And I don't care twopence about social possibilities.

Lady Bracknell. Never speak disrespectfully of Society, Algernon. Only people who can't get into it do that. [To **Cecily**.] Dear child, of course you know that Algernon has nothing but his debts to depend upon. But I do not approve of mercenary marriages. When I married Lord Bracknell I had no fortune of any kind. But I never dreamed for a moment of allowing that to stand in my way. Well, I suppose I must give my consent.

Algernon. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Lady Bracknell. Cecily, you may kiss me!

Cecily. [Kisses her.] Thank you, Lady Bracknell.

Lady Bracknell. You may also address me as Aunt Augusta for the future.

Cecily. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Lady Bracknell. The marriage, I think, had better take place quite soon.

Algernon. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Cecily. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

Lady Bracknell. To speak frankly, I am not in favour of long engagements. They give people the opportunity of finding out each other's character before marriage, which I think is never advisable.

Jack. I beg your pardon for interrupting you, Lady Bracknell, but this engagement is quite out of the question. I am Miss Cardew's guardian, and she cannot marry without my consent until she comes of age. That consent I absolutely decline to give.

Lady Bracknell. Upon what grounds may I ask? Algernon is an extremely, I may almost say an ostentatiously, eligible young man. He has nothing, but he looks everything. What more can one desire?

Jack. It pains me very much to have to speak frankly to you, Lady Bracknell, about your nephew, but the fact is that I do not approve at all of his moral character. I suspect him of being untruthful. [**Algernon** and **Cecily** look at him in indignant amazement.]

5. Government stocks, similar to savings bonds, that offered a stable if modest yield.

Lady Bracknell. Untruthful! My nephew Algernon? Impossible! He is an Oxonian[6].

Jack. I fear there can be no possible doubt about the matter. This afternoon during my temporary absence in London on an important question of romance, he obtained admission to my house by means of the false pretence of being my brother. Under an assumed name he drank, I've just been informed by my butler, an entire pint bottle of my Perrier-Jouet, Brut, '89; wine I was specially reserving for myself. Continuing his disgraceful deception, he succeeded in the course of the afternoon in alienating the affections of my only ward. He subsequently stayed to tea, and devoured every single muffin. And what makes his conduct all the more heartless is, that he was perfectly well aware from the first that I have no brother, that I never had a brother, and that I don't intend to have a brother, not even of any kind. I distinctly told him so myself yesterday afternoon.

Lady Bracknell. Ahem! Mr. Worthing, after careful consideration I have decided entirely to overlook my nephew's conduct to you.

Jack. That is very generous of you, Lady Bracknell. My own decision, however, is unalterable. I decline to give my consent.

Lady Bracknell. [To **Cecily**.] Come here, sweet child. [**Cecily** goes over.] How old are you, dear?

Cecily. Well, I am really only eighteen, but I always admit to twenty when I go to evening parties.

Lady Bracknell. You are perfectly right in making some slight alteration. Indeed, no woman should ever be quite accurate about her age. It looks so calculating . . . [In a meditative manner.] Eighteen, but admitting to twenty at evening parties. Well, it will not be very long before you are of age and free from the restraints of tutelage. So I don't think your guardian's consent is, after all, a matter of any importance.

Jack. Pray excuse me, Lady Bracknell, for interrupting you again, but it is only fair to tell you that according to the terms of her grandfather's will Miss Cardew does not come legally of age till she is thirty-five.

Lady Bracknell. That does not seem to me to be a grave objection. Thirty-five is a very attractive age. London society is full of women of the very highest birth who have, of their own free choice, remained thirty-five for years. Lady Dumbleton is an instance in point. To my own knowledge she has been thirty-five ever since she arrived at the age of forty, which was many years ago now. I see no reason why our dear Cecily should not be even still more attractive at the age you mention than she is at present. There will be a large accumulation of property.

Cecily. Algy, could you wait for me till I was thirty-five?

Algernon. Of course I could, Cecily. You know I could.

Cecily. Yes, I felt it instinctively, but I couldn't wait all that time. I hate waiting even five minutes for anybody. It always makes me rather cross. I am not punctual myself, I know, but I do like punctuality in others, and waiting, even to be married, is quite out of the question.

Algernon. Then what is to be done, Cecily?

Cecily. I don't know, Mr. Moncrieff.

Lady Bracknell. My dear Mr. Worthing, as Miss Cardew states positively that she cannot wait till she is thirty-five—a remark which I am bound to say seems to me to show a somewhat impatient nature—I would beg of you to reconsider your decision.

Jack. But my dear Lady Bracknell, the matter is entirely in your own hands. The moment you consent to my marriage with Gwendolen, I will most gladly allow your nephew to form an alliance with my ward.

Lady Bracknell. [Rising and drawing herself up.] You must be quite aware that what you propose is out of the question.

6. An alumnus of Oxford University.

Jack. Then a passionate celibacy is all that any of us can look forward to.

Lady Bracknell. That is not the destiny I propose for Gwendolen. Algernon, of course, can choose for himself. [Pulls out her watch.] Come, dear, [**Gwendolen** rises] we have already missed five, if not six, trains. To miss any more might expose us to comment on the platform.

[Enter **Dr. Chasuble**.]

Chasuble. Everything is quite ready for the christenings.

Lady Bracknell. The christenings, sir! Is not that somewhat premature?

Chasuble. [Looking rather puzzled, and pointing to **Jack** and **Algernon**.] Both these gentlemen have expressed a desire for immediate baptism.

Lady Bracknell. At their age? The idea is grotesque and irreligious! Algernon, I forbid you to be baptized. I will not hear of such excesses. Lord Bracknell would be highly displeased if he learned that that was the way in which you wasted your time and money.

Chasuble. Am I to understand then that there are to be no christenings at all this afternoon?

Jack. I don't think that, as things are now, it would be of much practical value to either of us, Dr. Chasuble.

Chasuble. I am grieved to hear such sentiments from you, Mr. Worthing. They savour of the heretical views of the Anabaptists, views that I have completely refuted in four of my unpublished sermons. However, as your present mood seems to be one peculiarly secular, I will return to the church at once. Indeed, I have just been informed by the pew-opener that for the last hour and a half Miss Prism has been waiting for me in the vestry.

Lady Bracknell. [Starting.] Miss Prism! Did I hear you mention a Miss Prism?

Chasuble. Yes, Lady Bracknell. I am on my way to join her.

Lady Bracknell. Pray allow me to detain you for a moment. This matter may prove to be one of vital importance to Lord Bracknell and myself. Is this Miss Prism a female of repellent aspect, remotely connected with education?

Chasuble. [Somewhat indignantly.] She is the most cultivated of ladies, and the very picture of respectability.

Lady Bracknell. It is obviously the same person. May I ask what position she holds in your household?

Chasuble. [Severely.] I am a celibate, madam.

Jack. [Interposing.] Miss Prism, Lady Bracknell, has been for the last three years Miss Cardew's esteemed governess and valued companion.

Lady Bracknell. In spite of what I hear of her, I must see her at once. Let her be sent for.

Chasuble. [Looking off.] She approaches; she is nigh.

[Enter **Miss Prism** hurriedly.]

Miss Prism. I was told you expected me in the vestry, dear Canon. I have been waiting for you there for an hour and three-quarters. [Catches sight of **Lady Bracknell**, who has fixed her with a stony glare. **Miss Prism** grows pale and quails. She looks anxiously round as if desirous to escape.]

Lady Bracknell. [In a severe, judicial voice.] Prism! [**Miss Prism** bows her head in shame.] Come here, Prism! [**Miss Prism** approaches in a humble manner.] Prism! Where is that baby? [General consternation. The **Canon** starts back in horror. **Algernon** and **Jack** pretend to be anxious to shield **Cecily** and **Gwendolen** from hearing the details of a terrible public scandal.] Twenty-eight years ago, Prism, you left Lord Bracknell's house, Number 104, Upper Grosvenor Street, in charge of a perambulator that contained a baby of the male sex. You never returned. A few weeks later, through the elaborate investigations of the Metropolitan police, the perambulator was discovered at midnight, standing by itself in a remote corner of Bayswater. It contained the manuscript of a three-volume novel

of more than usually revolting sentimentality. [**Miss Prism** starts in involuntary indignation.] But the baby was not there! [Every one looks at **Miss Prism**.] Prism! Where is that baby? [A pause.]

Miss Prism. Lady Bracknell, I admit with shame that I do not know. I only wish I did. The plain facts of the case are these. On the morning of the day you mention, a day that is for ever branded on my memory, I prepared as usual to take the baby out in its perambulator. I had also with me a somewhat old, but capacious hand-bag in which I had intended to place the manuscript of a work of fiction that I had written during my few unoccupied hours. In a moment of mental abstraction, for which I never can forgive myself, I deposited the manuscript in the basinette, and placed the baby in the hand-bag.

Jack. [Who has been listening attentively.] But where did you deposit the hand-bag?

Miss Prism. Do not ask me, Mr. Worthing.

Jack. Miss Prism, this is a matter of no small importance to me. I insist on knowing where you deposited the hand-bag that contained that infant.

Miss Prism. I left it in the cloak-room of one of the larger railway stations in London.

Jack. What railway station?

Miss Prism. [Quite crushed.] Victoria. The Brighton line. [Sinks into a chair.]

Jack. I must retire to my room for a moment. Gwendolen, wait here for me.

Gwendolen. If you are not too long, I will wait here for you all my life. [Exit **Jack** in great excitement.]

Chasuble. What do you think this means, Lady Bracknell?

Lady Bracknell. I dare not even suspect, Dr. Chasuble. I need hardly tell you that in families of high position strange coincidences are not supposed to occur. They are hardly considered the thing.

[Noises heard overhead as if some one was throwing trunks about. Every one looks up.]

Cecily. Uncle Jack seems strangely agitated.

Chasuble. Your guardian has a very emotional nature.

Lady Bracknell. This noise is extremely unpleasant. It sounds as if he was having an argument. I dislike arguments of any kind. They are always vulgar, and often convincing.

Chasuble. [Looking up.] It has stopped now. [The noise is redoubled.]

Lady Bracknell. I wish he would arrive at some conclusion.

Gwendolen. This suspense is terrible. I hope it will last. [Enter **Jack** with a hand-bag of black leather in his hand.]

Jack. [Rushing over to **Miss Prism**.] Is this the hand-bag, Miss Prism? Examine it carefully before you speak. The happiness of more than one life depends on your answer.

Miss Prism. [Calmly.] It seems to be mine. Yes, here is the injury it received through the upsetting of a Gower Street omnibus in younger and happier days. Here is the stain on the lining caused by the explosion of a temperance beverage, an incident that occurred at Leamington. And here, on the lock, are my initials. I had forgotten that in an extravagant mood I had had them placed there. The bag is undoubtedly mine. I am delighted to have it so unexpectedly restored to me. It has been a great inconvenience being without it all these years.

Jack. [In a pathetic voice.] Miss Prism, more is restored to you than this hand-bag. I was the baby you placed in it.

Miss Prism. [Amazed.] You?

Jack. [Embracing her.] Yes . . . mother!

Miss Prism. [Recoiling in indignant astonishment.] Mr. Worthing! I am unmarried!

Jack. Unmarried! I do not deny that is a serious blow. But after all, who has the right to cast a stone against one who has suffered? Cannot repentance wipe out an act of folly? Why should there be one law for men, and another for women? Mother, I forgive you. [Tries to embrace her again.]

Miss Prism. [Still more indignant.] Mr. Worthing, there is some error. [Pointing to **Lady Bracknell**.] There is the lady who can tell you who you really are.

Jack. [After a pause.] Lady Bracknell, I hate to seem inquisitive, but would you kindly inform me who I am?

Lady Bracknell. I am afraid that the news I have to give you will not altogether please you. You are the son of my poor sister, Mrs. Moncrieff, and consequently Algernon's elder brother.

Jack. Algy's elder brother! Then I have a brother after all. I knew I had a brother! I always said I had a brother! Cecily,—how could you have ever doubted that I had a brother? [Seizes hold of **Algernon**.] Dr. Chasuble, my unfortunate brother. Miss Prism, my unfortunate brother. Gwendolen, my unfortunate brother. Algy, you young scoundrel, you will have to treat me with more respect in the future. You have never behaved to me like a brother in all your life.

Algernon. Well, not till to-day, old boy, I admit. I did my best, however, though I was out of practice.

[Shakes hands.]

Gwendolen. [To **Jack**.] My own! But what own are you? What is your Christian name, now that you have become some one else?

Jack. Good heavens! . . . I had quite forgotten that point. Your decision on the subject of my name is irrevocable, I suppose?

Gwendolen. I never change, except in my affections.

Cecily. What a noble nature you have, Gwendolen!

Jack. Then the question had better be cleared up at once. Aunt Augusta, a moment. At the time when Miss Prism left me in the hand-bag, had I been christened already?

Lady Bracknell. Every luxury that money could buy, including christening, had been lavished on you by your fond and doting parents.

Jack. Then I was christened! That is settled. Now, what name was I given? Let me know the worst.

Lady Bracknell. Being the eldest son you were naturally christened after your father.

Jack. [Irritably.] Yes, but what was my father's Christian name?

Lady Bracknell. [Meditatively.] I cannot at the present moment recall what the General's Christian name was. But I have no doubt he had one. He was eccentric, I admit. But only in later years. And that was the result of the Indian climate, and marriage, and indigestion, and other things of that kind.

Jack. Algy! Can't you recollect what our father's Christian name was?

Algernon. My dear boy, we were never even on speaking terms. He died before I was a year old.

Jack. His name would appear in the Army Lists of the period, I suppose, Aunt Augusta?

Lady Bracknell. The General was essentially a man of peace, except in his domestic life. But I have no doubt his name would appear in any military directory.

Jack. The Army Lists of the last forty years are here. These delightful records should have been my constant study. [Rushes to bookcase and tears the books out.] M. Generals . . . Mallam, Maxbohm, Magley, what ghastly names they have—Markby, Migsby, Mobbs, Moncrieff! Lieutenant 1840, Captain, Lieutenant-Colonel, Colonel, General 1869, Christian names, Ernest John. [Puts book very quietly down and speaks quite calmly.] I always told you, Gwendolen, my name was Ernest, didn't I? Well, it is Ernest after all. I mean it naturally is Ernest.

Lady Bracknell. Yes, I remember now that the General was called Ernest, I knew I had some particular reason for disliking the name.

Gwendolen. Ernest! My own Ernest! I felt from the first that you could have no other name!

Jack. Gwendolen, it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth. Can you forgive me?

Gwendolen. I can. For I feel that you are sure to change.

Jack. My own one!

Chasuble. [To **Miss Prism**.] Lætitia! [Embraces her]

Miss Prism. [Enthusiastically.] Frederick! At last!

Algernon. Cecily! [Embraces her.] At last!

Jack. Gwendolen! [Embraces her.] At last!

Lady Bracknell. My nephew, you seem to be displaying signs of triviality.

Jack. On the contrary, Aunt Augusta, I've now realised for the first time in my life the vital Importance of Being Earnest.

TABLEAU

63.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

The Importance of Being Earnest

Act I

1. Discuss the significance of some of the characters' names. What do Jack and Algernon connote? Is Wilde alluding to Swinburne, and if so, why?
2. Find an example of a paradox with reference to Lady Harbury? Is Wilde commenting on one aspect of the "Woman Question" here?
3. Give two examples of irony in Act I.
4. Wilde's characters often create a witty line by standing familiar proverbs on their heads. Choose two or three of the following lines and show how they ridicule conventional moral beliefs:

   a. "Divorces are made in Heaven."

   b. "Produce your explanation and pray make it improbable."

   c. "The amount of women in London who flirt with their own husbands is perfectly scandalous. It looks so bad. It is simply washing one's clean linen in public."

   d. "You don't seem to realize that in married life three is company and two none."

   e. "I don't mind hard work where there is no definite object of any kind."

   f. "Few parents nowadays pay any regard to what their children say to them. The old-fashioned respect for the young is fast dying out."

5. Compare the way Jack uses his brother, Ernest, with the way Algernon uses Bunbury.
6. Contrast Lady Bracknell's attitude to marriage with that of Algernon.

Brief Writing Assignments

1. Choose one line or piece of dialogue that you think is especially clever or funny and explore

your reasons for liking it.

2. A conventional feature of most social comedy is the "blocking character"— often a parent or rival who opposes the romantic aspirations of the younger lovers. They often provide the basis for much of the comic action. Discuss Lady Bracknell as a blocking character. Who else in the play might be considered to be a blocking character?
3. Comment on the significance of Lord Bracknell, who never actually appears on stage.
4. Comment on the comic significance of Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble.

Essay Topics

Suggested length: 1,500 to 2,500 words. [Modified from P. Allingham, Essay Topics for *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Victorian Web]

1. According to Karl Beckson, "Central to Wilde's life and art was the idea of the dandy as the embodiment of the heroic ideal as well as of the **aesthetic** temperament hostile to bourgeois sentiment and morality" (p. 205). Which of the characters in the play embodies this aesthetic principle, and how? From your consideration of these characters' utterances and actions, develop an appropriate essay topic. Starting point: Consult this Internet definition of Dandy. Pay particular attention to Baudelaire's definition. For Gilbert and Sullivan, aestheticism was a subject for parody. See the operetta *Patience* (1881), particularly the song, "If You're Anxious for to Shine…"

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QR Code If You're Anxious For to shine

2. William Keach contends that Lady Bracknell's "cross-examination of Jack lays the groundwork for much of the rest of the plot" (p. 184), and that the underlying tension of the play depends upon "the contrast of city and country so important to the double lives being led" (p. 183). Explain these two points, then develop one of them into a suitable essay topic.

3. Otto Reinert claims that "Wilde's basic formula for satire is [his characters'] assumption of a code of behavior that represents the reality that Victorian convention pretends to ignore." Reinert argues that in this

play Wilde is principally concerned with the difference between conventional and actual manners and morality. Discuss these points, then refine this "formula for satire" into an essay topic.

4. Using three examples drawn from the play, show how Algernon uses Wilde's aesthetic principles to transform his life into a work of art.

Resources

A useful study guide to the play.

Robert F. Dietrich British Drama chapter on Earnest.

The Importance of Being Earnest (1952 Film).

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QR Code Importance of Being Earnest Film

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IX

Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936)

64.

Biography

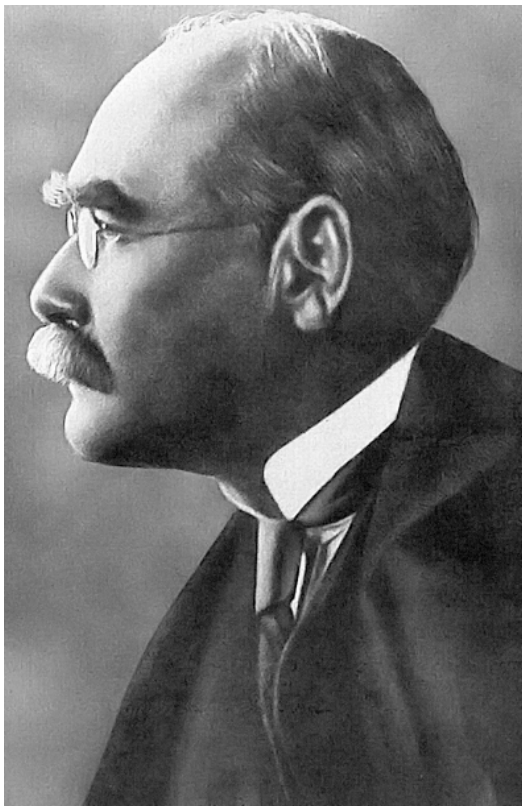


Figure 1: Joseph Rudyard Kipling

Joseph Rudyard Kipling was born December 30, 1865, in Bombay, India, to a British family. When he was five years old, he was taken to England to begin his education, where he suffered deep feelings of abandonment and confusion after leaving a pampered lifestyle as a colonial. He returned to India at the age of 17 to work as a journalist and editor for the *Civil and Military Gazette* in Lahore. Kipling published his first collection of verse, *Departmental Ditties and Other Verses,* in 1886, and his first collection of stories, *Plain Tales from the Hills,* in 1888.

In the early 1890s, some of his poems were published in William Ernest Henley's *National Observer* and later collected in *Barrack-Room Ballads* (1892), an immensely popular collection that contained "Gunga Din" and "Mandalay." In 1892, Kipling married and moved to Vermont, where he published the two *Jungle Books* and began work on *Kim*. He returned to England with his family in 1896 and published another novel, *Captains Courageous*. Kipling visited South Africa during the Boer War, editing a newspaper there and writing the *Just So Stories*. *Kim,* Kipling's most successful novel (and his last), appeared in 1901. The Kipling family moved to Sussex permanently in 1902, and he devoted the rest of his life to writing poetry and short stories, including his most famous poem, "If—." He died on January 18, 1936; his ashes are buried in Westminster Abbey.

Media Attributions

65.

Fuzzy-Wuzzy

Rudyard Kipling

Soudan Expeditionary force. Early campaign
We've fought with many men acrost the seas,
An' some of 'em was brave an' some was not.
The Paythan[1] an' the Zulu an' Burmese;
But the Fuzzy[2] was the finest o' the lot.
We never got a ha'porth's[3] change of 'im:
'E squatted in the scrub an' 'ocked our 'orses,
'E cut our sentries up at Suakim[4],
An' 'e played the cat an' banjo with our forces.
So 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Soudan;
You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man;
We gives you your certificate, an' if you want it signed
We'll come an' 'ave a romp with you whenever you're inclined.
We took our chanst among the Kyber'ills[5],
The Boers[6] knocked us silly at a mile,
The Burman give us Irriwady chills[7],
An' a Zulu *impi*[8] dished us up in style:
But all we ever got from such as they
Was pop[9] to what the Fuzzy made us swaller[10];
We 'eld our bloomin' own, the papers say,
But man for man the Fuzzy knocked us 'oller.
Then 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' the missis and the kid;
Our orders was to break you, an' of course we went an' did.

1. Pathans, people on the northwest frontier of India.
2. Sudanese followers of the Mahdi, so called because of their frizzled hair (Durand, Ralph. *A Handbook to the Poetry of Rudyard Kipling* [London: 1914]).
3. A halfpenny's worth.
4. A port in northeast Sudan on the Red Sea, it was the headquarters of British and Egyptian troops operating in the eastern Sudan against the dervishes in 1884 (Durand, 22).
5. Khyber Mountains between Afghanistan and Pakistan.
6. Dutch-speaking settlers in South Africa who fought against the British in the Boer Wars.
7. In the Burmese campaign, the British forces came down with malaria near the Irrawady River.
8. A regiment of the Zulus, a Bantu ethnic group in South Africa.
9. Ginger beer.
10. Swallow.

We sloshed you with Martinis[11], an' it wasn't 'ardly fair;
But for all the odds agin' you, Fuzzy-Wuz, you broke the square[12].
  'E 'asn't got no papers of 'is own,
'E 'asn't got no medals nor rewards,
So we must certify the skill 'e's shown
In usin' of 'is long two-'anded swords:
When 'e's 'oppin' in an' out among the bush
With 'is coffin-'eaded shield an' shovel-spear,
An 'appy day with Fuzzy on the rush
Will last an 'ealthy Tommy[13] for a year.
So 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' your friends which are no more,
If we 'adn't lost some messmates we would 'elp you to deplore;
But give an' take's the gospel, an' we'll call the bargain fair,
For if you 'ave lost more than us, you crumpled up the square!
  'E rushes at the smoke when we let drive,
An', before we know, 'e's 'ackin' at our 'ead;
'E's all 'ot sand an' ginger when alive,
An' 'e's generally shammin'[14] when 'e's dead.
'E's a daisy[15], 'e's a ducky[16], 'e's a lamb[17]!
'E's a injia-rubber idiot on the spree[18],
'E's the on'y thing that doesn't give a damn
For a Regiment o' British Infantree!
So 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Soudan;
You're a pore benighted 'eathen, but a first-class fightin' man;
An' 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with your 'ayrick 'ead of 'air—
You big black boundin' beggar—for you broke a British square!
  —1892.

[The editor is indebted to *Representative Poetry*, ed. Ian Lancashire for many of the notes to this poem].

11. A rifle in general use in the British Army from 1871-1888.
12. In 1884, near Tamai, the Sudanese army broke into the first British brigade square (a formation of soldiers) and "temporarily captured the naval guns" (Durand, 23).
13. Colloquial term for a British soldier.
14. Pretending.
15. Good fellow.
16. Nice chap.
17. Darling.
18. A drunken binge.

66.

Recessional

Rudyard Kipling

God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion[1] over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest[2] we forget—lest we forget[3]!

The tumult and the shouting dies;
The Captains and the Kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away;
On dune and headland sinks the fire[4]:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre[5]!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
Or lesser breeds without the Law[6]—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

1. Supreme power or sovereignty. See Genesis 1:26, “And God said, Let us make man in our image...and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea...and over all the earth....”
2. For fear that.
3. See Deuteronomy 4:9, “[T]ake heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen....”
4. The poem was written to mark the diamond jubilee celebrations commemorating the 60th year of Queen Victoria’s reign. Bonfires or “beacons” were kindled on high ground all over Britain on the night of the jubilee, just as they had also marked the occasion of Queen Victoria’s 50th, or golden jubilee, in 1887. See the first poem in Housman’s “A Shropshire Lad.”
5. Both cities were once capitals of great empires. Nineveh had once been the largest city in the world. In 1847, Sir Austen Henry Layard (1817-1894) there rediscovered the lost palaces of Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal.
6. See Romans 2:14. “...The Gentiles, which have not the law...are a law unto themselves.”

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard,
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding, calls not Thee to guard,
For frantic boast and foolish word—
Thy mercy on Thy People, Lord!

—1897

67.

The White Man's Burden

Rudyard Kipling

Take up the White Man's burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child.
    Take up the White Man's burden—
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain
To seek another's profit,
And work another's gain.
    Take up the White Man's burden—
The savage wars of peace—
Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest
The end for others sought,
Watch sloth and heathen Folly
Bring all your hopes to nought.
    Take up the White Man's burden—
No tawdry rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper—
The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter,
The roads ye shall not tread,
Go mark them with your living,
And mark them with your dead.
    Take up the White Man's burden—
And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard—
The cry of hosts ye humour

(Ah, slowly!) toward the light:—
“Why brought he us from bondage,
Our loved Egyptian night?[1]”
Take up the White Man’s burden—
Ye dare not stoop to less—
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To cloke your weariness;
By all ye cry or whisper,
By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples
Shall weigh your gods and you.
Take up the White Man’s burden—
Have done with childish days—
The lightly proferred laurel[2],
The easy, ungrudged praise.
Comes now, to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgment of your peers!
—1899

1. In Exodus 16: 2-3, the Israelites, suffering from hunger in the wilderness, criticized Moses and Aaron for taking them from the relative comfort of slavery in Egypt.
2. Classical symbol of victory and peace.

68.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

Fuzzy-Wuzzy

Prof. Florence Boos points out that "the British had fought several "wars" of conquest in Africa, including a Zulu war in which natives overran a British army with spears. In the 1890s, the British – motivated by the desire to control territory near the Suez Canal – authorized an expeditionary force to conquer the Sudan. Britain remained in control of the region until 1956" in her study questions.

1. Who is the poem's speaker? Why would Kipling have chosen him to represent British presence in the Nile region?
2. The term "Fuzzy-Wuzzy" refers to the Sudanese Hadandoa tribesmen of the upper Nile, who charged into battle with their hair arranged to look as fearsome as possible. What is the effect of the speaker's use of this term? Of his reference to his enemy in the singular?
3. What do we know about the speaker from his use of language?
4. What attitudes are ascribed to the speaker as he says, "We'll come an' 'have romp with you whenever you're inclined"? What other attitudes seemingly appropriate for a British soldier does he exhibit?
5. On what grounds does the speaker respect his enemy? Are the Hadandoa expected to successfully defend their homeland? What are the implications of praising the tribesmen for breaking "a British square" (a reference to the victory of the Sudanese in the battle of Tamai, 1884)?
6. How do the poem's stanza form and rhythms convey or complement its meaning?
7. In reading this poem, what attitude toward the issue of imperialist wars is the Victorian reader expected to take?

Recessional

1. What are implications of the poem's title? A recessional is a hymn or solemn musical piece at the conclusion of a service or program.
2. Who is the poem's speaker? What effect is created by the fact that the poem is a prayer?
3. To what "verities" and past historical events does the poem allude in the first stanza? What

relationship does the "Lord of Hosts" have to the British Empire?

4. What does the speaker predict will be the fate of the British empire? What does he fear will be forgotten?
5. In stanza 4, what dreaded fate does the speaker fear will overtake the British? In this context, who are the "Gentiles," and "lesser breeds without the Law"? Is this law political or religious?
6. What are the "reeking tube and iron shard"? For what do the speaker's people require mercy?
7. Who are the "People" of the poem's final line? What is the poem's final tone? What is its view of the nature and value of the "imperial project"?

The White Man's Burden

Originally, Kipling began this poem to commemorate Queen Victoria's 60th jubilee in 1897, but he abandoned it, later taking it up again as a response to events that led to the Spanish-American War in 1899.

1. According to Kipling, and in your own words, what was the "White Man's Burden"?
2. What reward did Kipling suggest the "White Man" get for carrying his "burden"?
3. Who did Kipling think would read his poem? What do you think that this audience might have said in response to it? Look up *McClure's Magazine* online.
4. Read the original publication of the poem in *McClure's Magazine*. Be sure to download pages 290 and 291 for the full poem.
5. Next, read two parodies of Kipling's poem: George McNeill, "The Poor Man's Burden" and H.T. Johnson, "The Black Man's Burden".
6. For what audiences do you think McNeill and Johnson wrote their poems? How do you think those audiences might have responded to "The Black Man's Burden" and "The Poor Man's Burden"?

Resources

Recessional.

Watch the following video:



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?p=445

QR Code St Bartholomews Church

X

Thomas Hardy (1840–1928)

69.

Biography

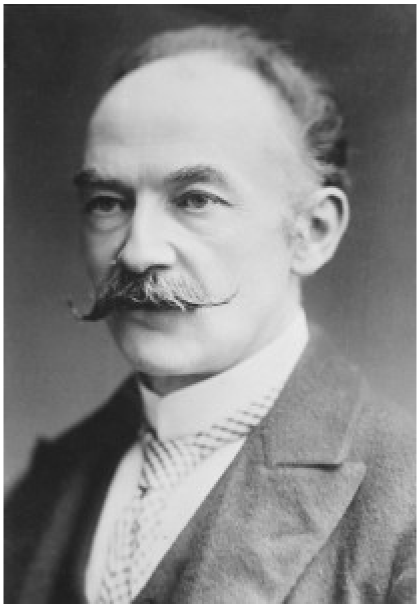


Figure 1: Thomas Hardy

Thomas Hardy, the son of a stonemason, was born in Dorset, England, on June 2, 1840. He trained as an architect and worked in London and Dorset for 10 years. Hardy began his writing career as a novelist, publishing *Desperate Remedies* in 1871, and was soon successful enough to leave the field of architecture for writing. His novels *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895), which are considered literary classics today, received negative reviews upon publication, and Hardy was criticized for being too pessimistic and preoccupied with sex. He left fiction writing for poetry and published eight collections, including *Wessex Poems* (1898) and *Satires of Circumstance* (1912).

Hardy's poetry explores a fatalist outlook against the dark, rugged landscape of his native Dorset. He rejected the Victorian belief of a benevolent God, and much of his poetry reads as a sardonic lament on the bleakness of the human condition. A traditionalist in technique, he nevertheless forged a highly original style, combining rough-hewn rhythms and colloquial diction with an extraordinary variety of meters and stanzaic forms. He was a significant influence on later poets (including Robert Frost, W. H. Auden, Dylan Thomas, and Philip Larkin), and that influence increased during the course of the 20th century, offering an alternative—more down-to-earth, less rhetorical—to the more mystical and aristocratic precedent of Yeats. Thomas Hardy died on January 11, 1928.

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70.

Hap

Thomas Hardy

[1]

If but some vengeful god would call to me
From up the sky, and laugh: “Thou suffering thing,
Know that thy sorrow is my ecstasy,
That thy love’s loss is my hate’s profiting!”
Then would I bear it, clench myself, and die,
Steeled by the sense of ire[2] unmerited;
Half-eased in that a Powerfuller than I
Had willed and meted[3] me the tears I shed.
But not so. How arrives it joy lies slain,
And why unblooms the best hope ever sown?
—Crass Casualty[4] obstructs the sun and rain,
And dicing Time for gladness casts a moan. . . .
These purblind Doomsters[5] had as readily strown
Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain.
— 1898

1. Chance, happenstance.
2. Anger, wrath.
3. Given.
4. Chance.
5. Partly blind and obtuse judges.

71.

Drummer Hodge

Thomas Hardy

I
They throw in Drummer Hodge, to rest
Uncoffined – just as found:
His landmark is a kopje-crest[1]
That breaks the veldt[2] around;
And foreign constellations west
Each night above his mound.
II
Young Hodge the Drummer never knew –
Fresh from his Wessex home –
The meaning of the broad Karoo[3],
The Bush, the dusty loam,
And why uprose to nightly view
Strange stars amid the gloam.
III
Yet portion of that unknown plain
Will Hodge forever be;
His homely Northern breast and brain
Grow to some Southern tree,
And strange-eyed constellations reign
His stars eternally.
— 1901

1. Afrikaans for "small hill."
2. South African grassland.
3. Semi-desert region of South Africa.

72.

The Subalterns

Thomas Hardy

[1]

I
'Poor wanderer,' said the leaden sky,
'I fain[2] would lighten thee,
But there are laws in force on high
Which say it must not be.'
II
-'I would not freeze thee, shorn one,' cried
The North, 'knew I but how
To warm my breath, to slack my stride;
But I am ruled as thou.'
III
-'To-morrow I attack thee, wight,'
Said Sickness. 'Yet I swear
I bear thy little ark no spite,
But am bid enter there.'
IV
-'Come hither, Son,' I heard Death say;
'I did not will a grave
Should end thy pilgrimage to-day,
But I, too, am a slave!'
V
We smiled upon each other then,
And life to me had less
Of that fell look it wore ere when
They owned their passiveness.
— 1901

1. A person holding a subordinate position. In the British Army, an officer ranked below captain.
2. Gladly.

73.

The Ruined Maid

Thomas Hardy

"O 'Melia[1], my dear, this does everything crown!
Who could have supposed I should meet you in Town?
And whence such fair garments, such prosperi-ty?" —
"O didn't you know I'd been ruined?" said she.
— "You left us in tatters, without shoes or socks,
Tired of digging potatoes, and spudding up docks[2];
And now you've gay bracelets and bright feathers three!" —
"Yes: that's how we dress when we're ruined," said she.
— "At home in the barton[3] you said thee' and thou,'
And thik oon,' and theäs oon,' and t'other'; but now
Your talking quite fits 'ee for high compa-ny!" —
"Some polish is gained with one's ruin," said she.
— "Your hands were like paws then, your face blue and bleak
But now I'm bewitched by your delicate cheek,
And your little gloves fit as on any la-dy!" —
"We never do work when we're ruined," said she.
— "You used to call home-life a hag-ridden dream,
And you'd sigh, and you'd sock[4]; but at present you seem
To know not of megrims[5] or melancho-ly!" —
"True. One's pretty lively when ruined," said she.
— "I wish I had feathers, a fine sweeping gown,
And a delicate face, and could strut about Town!" —
"My dear — a raw country girl, such as you be,
Cannot quite expect that. You ain't ruined," said she.
— 1901

1. Short and familiar form of Amelia.
2. Weeds.
3. Farmyard.
4. Sigh.
5. Low spirits.

74.

The Impercipient

Thomas Hardy

(at a Cathedral Service)
That from this bright believing band
An outcast I should be,
That faiths by which my comrades stand
Seem fantasies to me,
And mirage-mists their Shining Land,
Is a drear destiny.
Why thus my soul should be consigned
To infelicity,
Why always I must feel as blind
To sights my brethren see,
Why joys they've found I cannot find,
Abides[1] a mystery.
Since heart of mine knows not that ease
Which they know; since it be
That He who breathes All's Well to these
Breathes no All's Well to me,
My lack might move their sympathies
And Christian charity!
I am like a gazer who should mark
An inland company
Standing upfingered, with, "Hark! hark!
The glorious distant sea!"
And feel, "Alas, 'tis but yon dark
And wind-swept pine to me!"
Yet I would bear my shortcomings
With meet tranquillity,
But for the charge that blessed things
I'd liefer[2] have unbe.
O, doth a bird deprived of wings
Go earth-bound wilfully!
. . . .
Enough. As yet disquiet clings
About us. Rest shall we.
— 1898

1. Remains.
2. Rather.

75.

Mad Judy

Thomas Hardy

When the hamlet hailed a birth
Judy used to cry:
When she heard our christening mirth
She would kneel and sigh.
She was crazed, we knew, and we
Humoured her infirmity.
    When the daughters and the sons
Gathered them to wed,
And we like-intending ones
Danced till dawn was red,
She would rock and mutter, “More
Comers to this stony shore!”
    When old Headsman[1] Death laid hands
On a babe or twain[2],
She would feast, and by her brands[3]
Sing her songs again.
What she liked we let her do,
Judy was insane, we knew.
    — 1901

1. Executioner.
2. Poetical form of “two.”
3. Burning pieces of wood.

76.

The Going

Thomas Hardy

Why did you give no hint that night
That quickly after the morrow's dawn,
And calmly, as if indifferent quite,
You[1] would close your term here, up and be gone
Where I could not follow
With wing of swallow
To gain one glimpse of you ever anon!
    Never to bid good-bye
Or lip me the softest call,
Or utter a wish for a word, while I
Saw morning harden upon the wall,
Unmoved, unknowing
That your great going
Had place that moment, and altered all.
    Why do you make me leave the house
And think for a breath it is you I see
At the end of the alley of bending boughs
Where so often at dusk you used to be;
Till in darkening dankness
The yawning blankness
Of the perspective sickens me!
    You were she who abode
By those red-veined rocks far West,
You were the swan-necked one who rode
Along the beetling Beeny Crest[2],
And, reining nigh me,
Would muse and eye me,
While Life unrolled us its very best.
    Why, then, latterly did we not speak,
Did we not think of those days long dead,
And ere your vanishing strive to seek
That time's renewal? We might have said,
    "In this bright spring weather

1. Hardy's first wife, Emma. They married in 1874, and she died in 1912.
2. A cliff on the sea coast of northern Cornwall near the village where Hardy first met and began courting Emma Gifford. Hardy's biographer notes that Emma was a fine horsewoman, who enjoyed "galloping over the hills on her beloved mare...bright hair streaming" (Halliday, p. 56).

We'll visit together
Those places that once we visited."
   Well, well! All's past amend,
Unchangeable. It must go.
I seem but a dead man held on end
To sink down soon. . . . O you could not know
That such swift fleeing
No soul foreseeing—
Not even I—would undo me so!
   — 1912

77.

The Haunter

Thomas Hardy

He does not think that I haunt here nightly:
How shall I let him know
That whither his fancy sets him wandering
I, too, alertly go?—
Hover and hover a few feet from him
Just as I used to do,
But cannot answer his words addressed me —
Only listen thereto!
When I could answer he did not say them:
When I could let him know
How I would like to join in his journeys
Seldom he wished to go.
Now that he goes and wants me with him
More than he used to do,
Never he sees my faithful phantom
Though he speaks thereto.
Yes, I accompany him to places
Only dreamers know,
Where the shy hares limp long paces,
Where the night rooks go;
Into old aisles where the past is all to him,
Close as his shade can do,
Always lacking the power to call to him,
Near as I reach thereto!
What a good haunter I am, O tell him,
Quickly make him know
If he but sigh since my loss befell him
Straight to his side I go.
Tell him a faithful one is doing
All that love can do
Still that his path may be worth pursuing,
And to bring peace thereto.
— 1912

78.

The Convergence of the Twain

Thomas Hardy

(Lines on the loss of the Titanic*)*

I

In a solitude of the sea
Deep from human vanity,
And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly couches she.

II

Steel chambers, late the pyres
Of her salamandrine fires,
Cold currents thrid, and turn to rhythmic tidal lyres.

III

Over the mirrors meant
To glass the opulent
The sea-worm crawls — grotesque, slimed, dumb, indifferent.

IV

Jewels in joy designed
To ravish the sensuous mind
Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and black and blind.

V

Dim moon-eyed fishes near
Gaze at the gilded gear
And query: “What does this vaingloriousness down here?” …

VI

Well: while was fashioning
This creature of cleaving wing,
The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything

VII

Prepared a sinister mate
For her — so gaily great —
A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate.

VIII

And as the smart ship grew
In stature, grace, and hue,
In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg too.

IX

Alien they seemed to be;
No mortal eye could see
The intimate welding of their later history,

X
Or sign that they were bent
By paths coincident
On being anon twin halves of one august event,

XI
Till the Spinner of the Years
Said “Now!” And each one hears,
And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.

— 1914

79.

Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave?

Thomas Hardy

"Ah, are you digging on my grave,
My loved one? — planting rue[1]?"
— "No: yesterday he went to wed
One of the brightest wealth has bred.
'It cannot hurt her now,' he said,
'That I should not be true.'"
   "Then who is digging on my grave,
My nearest dearest kin?"
— "Ah, no: they sit and think, 'What use!
What good will planting flowers produce?
No tendance of her mound can loose
Her spirit from Death's gin[2].'"
   "But someone digs upon my grave?
My enemy? — prodding sly?"
— "Nay: when she heard you had passed the Gate
That shuts on all flesh soon or late,
She thought you no more worth her hate,
And cares not where you lie.
   "Then, who is digging on my grave?
Say — since I have not guessed!"
— "O it is I, my mistress dear,
Your little dog , who still lives near,
And much I hope my movements here
Have not disturbed your rest?"
   "Ah yes! *You* dig upon my grave…
Why flashed it not to me
That one true heart was left behind!
What feeling do we ever find
To equal among human kind
A dog's fidelity!"
   "Mistress, I dug upon your grave
To bury a bone, in case
I should be hungry near this spot
When passing on my daily trot.

1. A strong-scented, woody herb. Also, sorrow, regret.
2. A trap.

I am sorry, but I quite forgot
It was your resting place."
— 1914

80.

Let Me Enjoy

Thomas Hardy

I
   Let me enjoy the earth no less
Because the all-enacting Might
That fashioned forth its loveliness
Had other aims than my delight.
   II
   About my path there flits a Fair,
Who throws me not a word or sign;
I'll charm me with her ignoring air,
And laud the lips not meant for mine.
   III
   From manuscripts of moving song
Inspired by scenes and dreams unknown
I'll pour out raptures that belong
To others, as they were my own.
   IV
   And some day hence, towards Paradise
And all its blest — if such should be —
I will lift glad, afar-off eyes
Though it contain no place for me.
   —1909

81.

Channel Firing

Thomas Hardy

[1]

That night your great guns, unawares,
Shook all our coffins as we lay,
And broke the chancel[2] window-squares,
We thought it was the Judgment-day
And sat upright. While drearisome
Arose the howl of wakened hounds:
The mouse let fall the altar-crumb,
The worms drew back into the mounds,
The glebe[3] cow drooled. Till God called, "No;
It's gunnery practice out at sea
Just as before you went below;
The world is as it used to be:
"All nations striving strong to make
Red war yet redder. Mad as hatters
They do no more for Christés sake
Than you who are helpless in such matters.
"That this is not the judgment-hour
For some of them's a blessed thing,
For if it were they'd have to scour
Hell's floor for so much threatening….
"Ha, ha. It will be warmer when
I blow the trumpet (if indeed
I ever do; for you are men,
And rest eternal sorely need)."
So down we lay again. "I wonder,
Will the world ever saner be,"
Said one, "than when He sent us under
In our indifferent century!"
And many a skeleton shook his head.
"Instead of preaching forty year,"
My neighbour Parson Thirdly said,
"I wish I had stuck to pipes and beer."
Again the guns disturbed the hour,

1. The title refers to gunnery practice in the English Channel in April 1914. World War I began on August 4, 1914.
2. Part of the church nearest the altar.
3. A portion of land assigned to a clergyman as part of his benefice.

Roaring their readiness to avenge,
As far inland as Stourton Tower[4],
And Camelot, and starlit Stonehenge.
— 1914

4. King Alfred's Tower was built near Stourton in the county of Wiltshire, to celebrate a victory by the Saxon, King Alfred, over the Danes in AD 878. Camelot was the legendary site of King Arthur's court, and Stonehenge is the site of the prehistoric stone circle at Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain.

82.

The Man He Killed

Thomas Hardy

“Had he and I but met
By some old ancient inn,
We should have sat us down to wet
Right many a nipperkin!
 “But ranged as infantry,
And staring face to face,
I shot at him as he at me,
And killed him in his place.
 “I shot him dead because —
Because he was my foe,
Just so: my foe of course he was;
That’s clear enough; although
 “He thought he’d ‘list, perhaps,
Off-hand like — just as I —
Was out of work — had sold his traps —
No other reason why.
 “Yes; quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You’d treat if met where any bar is,
Or help to half-a-crown.”
 — 1901

83.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

Drummer Hodge

1. What place and what war make up the setting?
2. Compare the point of stanza 3 to a similar point made in Rupert Brooke's "The Soldier."

The Subalterns

1. Clarify Hardy's use of personification in each stanza.
2. Define the adjective "fell" in the last stanza, then paraphrase the sentence that comprises the last stanza.

The Ruined Maid

1. What are some meanings of the word "ruined"?
2. Look up the word "maid." What does the word mean in the title?
3. Describe the structure: the number of speakers, the use of dashes, who speaks first, who speaks last.
4. Describe the two former co-workers.
5. Can you distinguish between the two women's speech patterns?
6. What is the main irony?

The Impercipient

1. Look up the word "percipient," then state the significance of the prefix "im."
2. In stanza 2, focus on the word "infelicity." Look up "felicity" in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and then consider the importance of the prefix "in."
3. In stanza 3, why does the speaker feel it might be appropriate to be the object of Christian

charity?

4. Suggest synonyms for the verb “mark” in stanza 4 and the adjective “meet” in stanza 5.
5. What is the meaning of “liefer” in stanza 5?
6. In stanza 5, what charge or accusation against the speaker adds insult to injury?
7. Paraphrase the last two lines. What is their overall tone?

Mad Judy

1. Who is the speaker?
2. In stanza 2, Judy uses the metaphor “this stony shore.” To what does she refer?
3. Look up “brands” and “headsman” in a good dictionary.
4. Explain the irony in the poem. Which of the three types of irony is it?

The Going and The Haunter

1. Read the discussion of the poems about Emma by Andrew Moore at the following link: http://www.universalteacher.org.uk/poetry/hardy
2. Who was Emma Gifford (1840-1912)?

The Convergence of the Twain

1. In what year did the *Titanic* sink?
2. Define both nouns in the title.
3. Paraphrase the first stanza, placing the grammatical subject at the beginning of the sentence.
4. Who is guilty of pride?
5. How does alliteration emphasize theme?
6. How is the deity depicted? How is the deity depicted in “Let Me Enjoy”?
7. What is the “creature of cleaving wing”?
8. Clarify the marriage metaphor in the poem.

Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave?

1. Clarify the major irony and its type in this poem.
2. Compare this poem with Housman’s “Is My Team Ploughing?”

Channel Firing

1. To what promised biblical event does the poem refer?
2. Who is the speaker?
3. How does Hardy use humour to make serious points about war?
4. How is this a pessimistic poem?
5. Discuss the thematic significance of the three places mentioned in the last two lines.

The Man He Killed

1. Comment on how the speaker's diction characterizes him.
2. Why did the soldier enlist?
3. Give specific examples of irony in the third stanza and final stanzas. What are the denotations of "quaint" and "curious"?
4. How does Hardy's use of dashes affect the metre and theme?

Resources

Hap

Read the sample student essay on "Hap".

Let Me Enjoy

Listen to this poem as it was set to music by Gerald Finzi (1901-56):



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: [*https://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?p=304*](https://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?p=304)

QR Code Let Me Enjoy

XI

George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950)

84.

Biography

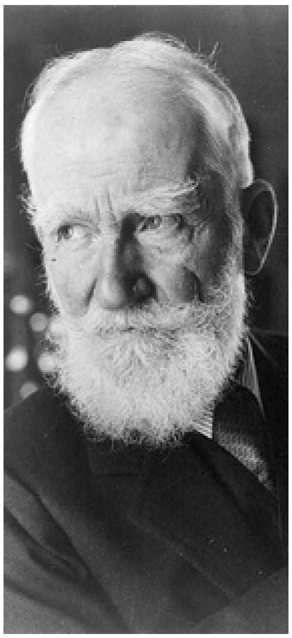


Figure 1: George Bernard Shaw

G. Bernard Shaw (he hated the "George" and never used it, either personally or professionally) was born in 1856 in Dublin, Ireland, in a lower-middle-class family of Scottish-Protestant ancestry. His father was a failed corn merchant, with a drinking problem and a squint (which Oscar Wilde's father, a leading Dublin surgeon, tried unsuccessfully to correct); his mother was a professional singer, the sole disciple of Vandeleur Lee, a voice teacher claiming to have a unique and original approach to singing.

When Shaw was just short of his 16th birthday, his mother left her husband and son and moved with Vandeleur Lee to London, where the two set up a household, along with Shaw's older sister, Lucy (who later became a successful music hall singer). Shaw remained in Dublin with his father, completing his schooling (which he hated passionately), and working as a clerk for an estate office (which he hated just as much as school).

It may not be accidental, then, that Shaw's plays, including *Misalliance*, are filled with problematic parent-child relationships: with children who are brought up in isolation from their parents; with foundlings, orphans, and adopted heirs; and with parents who wrongly presume that they are entitled to their children's obedience and affection.

In 1876, Shaw left Dublin and his father and moved to London, moving in with his mother's *menage*. There he lived off his mother and sister while pursuing a career in journalism and writing. The first medium he tried as a creative writer was prose, completing five novels (the first one appropriately titled *Immaturity*) before any of them were published. He read voraciously, in public libraries and in the British Museum reading room. He also became involved in progressive politics. Standing on a soapbox

at Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park and at socialist rallies, he learned to overcome his stagefright and his stammer. And, to hold the attention of the crowd, he developed an energetic and aggressive speaking style that is evident in all of his writing.

With Beatrice and Sidney Webb, Shaw founded the Fabian Society, a socialist political organization dedicated to transforming Britain into a socialist state, not by revolution but by systematic progressive legislation, bolstered by persuasion and mass education. The Fabian Society would later be instrumental in founding the London School of Economics and the Labour Party. Shaw lectured for the Fabian Society and wrote pamphlets on the progressive arts, including *The Perfect Wagnerite*, an interpretation of Richard Wagner's Ring cycle, and *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, based on a series of lectures about the progressive Norwegian playwright, Henrik Ibsen. Meanwhile, as a journalist, Shaw worked as an art critic, then as a music critic (writing under the pseudonym "Corno di Bassetto"), and finally, from 1895 to 1898, as theatre critic for *Saturday Review*, where his reviews appeared over the infamous initials "GBS."

In 1891, at the invitation of J. T. Grein, a merchant, theatre critic, and director of a progressive private new-play society, the Independent Theatre, Shaw wrote his first play, *Widower's Houses*. Over the next 12 years, he wrote close to a dozen plays, though he generally failed to persuade the managers of the London theatres to produce them. A few were produced abroad; one (*Arms and the Man*) was produced under the auspices of an experimental management; one (*Mrs Warren's Profession*) was censored by the Lord Chamberlain's Examiner of Plays (the civil servant who, from 1737 until 1967, was empowered with the prior censorship of all spoken drama in England); and several were presented in single performances by private societies.

In 1898, after a serious illness, Shaw resigned as theatre critic and moved out of his mother's house (where he was still living) to marry Charlotte Payne-Townsend, an Irish woman of independent means. Their marriage (quite possibly unconsummated) lasted until Charlotte's death in 1943.

In 1904, Harley Granville Barker, an actor, director, and playwright 20 years younger than Shaw who had appeared in a private theatre society's production of Shaw's *Candida*, took over the management of the Court Theatre on Sloane Square in Chelsea (outside of the "theatreland" of the fashionable West End) and set it up as an experimental theatre specializing in new and progressive drama. Over the next three seasons, Barker produced 10 plays by Shaw (with Barker officially listed as director, but with Shaw actually directing his own plays), and Shaw began writing new plays with Barker's management specifically in mind. Over the next 10 years, all but one of Shaw's plays (*Pygmalion* in 1914) was produced either by Barker or by Barker's friends and colleagues in the other experimental theater managements around England. With the royalty income from his plays, Shaw, who had become financially independent on marrying, became quite wealthy. Throughout the decade, he remained active in the Fabian Society, in city government (he served as vestryman for the London borough of St. Pancras), and on committees dedicated to ending dramatic censorship and to establishing a subsidized national theatre.

The outbreak of war in 1914 changed Shaw's life. For Shaw, the war represented the bankruptcy of the capitalist system, the last desperate gasps of the 19th-century empires, and a tragic waste of young lives, all under the guise of patriotism. He expressed his opinions in a series of newspaper articles under the title *Common Sense about the War*. These articles proved to be a disaster for Shaw's public stature: he was treated as an outcast in his adopted country, and there was even talk of his being tried for treason. His dramatic output ground to a halt, and he succeeded in writing only one major play during the war years, *Heartbreak House*, into which he projected his bitterness and despair about British politics and society.

After the war, Shaw found his dramatic voice again and rebuilt his reputation, first with a series of five plays about "creative evolution," *Back to Methuselah*, and then, in 1923, with *Saint Joan*. In 1925, he

was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. (Not needing the money, he donated the cash award toward an English translation of the works of the Swedish playwright August Strindberg, who had never been recognized with a Nobel prize by the Swedish Academy). Shaw's plays were regularly produced and revived in London. As well, several theatre companies in the United States began producing his plays, old and new, on a regular basis (most notably the Theatre Guild in New York, and the Hedgerow Theatre, in Rose Valley, Pennsylvania, which became internationally known for its advocacy of the plays of Shaw and of the Irish playwright Sean O'Casey). In the late 1920s, a Shaw festival was established in Malvern, England.

Shaw lived the rest of his life as an international celebrity, travelling the world, continually involved in local and international politics. He visited the Soviet Union at the invitation of Stalin, and he visited the United States briefly at the invitation of William Randolph Hearst, stepping on shore only twice, for a lecture at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, and for lunch at Hearst's castle in San Simeon in California. He continued to write thousands of letters and over a dozen more plays.

In 1950, Shaw fell off a ladder while trimming a tree on his property at Ayot St. Lawrence in Hertfordshire, outside of London, and he died a few days later of complications from the injury at age 94. He had been at work on yet another play (*Why She Would Not*). In his will, he left a large part of his estate to a project to revamp the English alphabet. (Only one volume was published with the new "Shaw Alphabet": a parallel text edition of Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion*). After that project failed, the estate was divided among the other beneficiaries in his will: the National Gallery of Ireland, the British Museum, and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. Royalties from Shaw's plays, and from the musical *My Fair Lady*, based on Shaw's *Pygmalion*, have helped to balance the budgets of these institutions ever since.

Media Attributions

85.

Major Barbara: Act I

George Bernard Shaw

It is after dinner on a January night, in the library in Lady Britomart[1] Undershaft's house in Wilton Crescent[2]. A large and comfortable settee is in the middle of the room, upholstered in dark leather. A person sitting on it [it is vacant at present] would have, on his right, Lady Britomart's writing table, with the lady herself busy at it; a smaller writing table behind him on his left; the door behind him on Lady Britomart's side; and a window with a window seat directly on his left. Near the window is an armchair.

Lady Britomart is a woman of fifty or thereabouts, well dressed and yet careless of her dress, well bred and quite reckless of her breeding, well mannered and yet appallingly outspoken and indifferent to the opinion of her interlocutory, amiable and yet peremptory, arbitrary, and high-tempered to the last bearable degree, and withal a very typical managing matron of the upper class, treated as a naughty child until she grew into a scolding mother, and finally settling down with plenty of practical ability and worldly experience, limited in the oddest way with domestic and class limitations, conceiving the universe exactly as if it were a large house in Wilton Crescent, though handling her corner of it very effectively on that assumption, and being quite enlightened and liberal as to the books in the library, the pictures on the walls, the music in the portfolios, and the articles in the papers.

Her son, Stephen, comes in. He is a gravely correct young man under 25, taking himself very seriously, but still in some awe of his mother, from childish habit and bachelor shyness rather than from any weakness of character.

Stephen. What's the matter?

Lady Britomart. Presently, Stephen.

Stephen submissively walks to the settee and sits down. He takes up The Speaker[3].

Lady Britomart. Don't begin to read, Stephen. I shall require all your attention.

Stephen. It was only while I was waiting —

Lady Britomart. Don't make excuses, Stephen. [He puts down The Speaker]. Now! [She finishes her writing; rises; and comes to the settee]. I have not kept you waiting very long, I think.

Stephen. Not at all, mother.

Lady Britomart. Bring me my cushion. [He takes the cushion from the chair at the desk and arranges it for her as she sits down on the settee]. Sit down. [He sits down and fingers his tie nervously]. Don't fiddle with your tie, Stephen: there is nothing the matter with it.

Stephen. I beg your pardon. [He fiddles with his watch chain instead].

Lady Britomart. Now are you attending to me, Stephen?

Stephen. Of course, mother.

Lady Britomart. No: it's not of course. I want something much more than your everyday matter-of-

1. Heroine of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene, Book 3*, she represents English virtue (chastity) but also military power (Brit + Mars). She is "destined to secure the future for her children." (Wise and Walker, *Broadview Anth*., p. 227.) She is modelled on Rosalind Howard, Countess of Carlisle (1845-1921), a Liberal advocate of women's suffrage and supporter of temperance.
2. A wealthy residential area in London's Belgravia district.
3. A Liberal weekly newspaper.

course attention. I am going to speak to you very seriously, Stephen. I wish you would let that chain alone.

Stephen [hastily relinquishing the chain] Have I done anything to annoy you, mother? If so, it was quite unintentional.

Lady Britomart [astonished] Nonsense! [With some remorse] My poor boy, did you think I was angry with you?

Stephen. What is it, then, mother? You are making me very uneasy.

Lady Britomart [squaring herself at him rather aggressively] Stephen: may I ask how soon you intend to realize that you are a grown-up man, and that I am only a woman?

Stephen [amazed] Only a —

Lady Britomart. Don't repeat my words, please: It is a most aggravating habit. You must learn to face life seriously, Stephen. I really cannot bear the whole burden of our family affairs any longer. You must advise me: you must assume the responsibility.

Stephen. I!

Lady Britomart. Yes, you, of course. You were 24 last June. You've been at Harrow[4] and Cambridge. You've been to India and Japan. You must know a lot of things now; unless you have wasted your time most scandalously. Well, advise me.

Stephen [much perplexed] You know I have never interfered in the household —

Lady Britomart. No: I should think not. I don't want you to order the dinner.

Stephen. I mean in our family affairs.

Lady Britomart. Well, you must interfere now; for they are getting quite beyond me.

Stephen [troubled] I have thought sometimes that perhaps I ought; but really, mother, I know so little about them; and what I do know is so painful — it is so impossible to mention some things to you —[he stops, ashamed].

Lady Britomart. I suppose you mean your father.

Stephen [almost inaudibly] Yes.

Lady Britomart. My dear: we can't go on all our lives not mentioning him. Of course you were quite right not to open the subject until I asked you to; but you are old enough now to be taken into my confidence, and to help me to deal with him about the girls.

Stephen. But the girls are all right. They are engaged.

Lady Britomart [complacently] Yes: I have made a very good match for Sarah. Charles Lomax will be a millionaire at 35. But that is ten years ahead; and in the meantime his trustees cannot under the terms of his father's will allow him more than 800 pounds a year.

Stephen. But the will says also that if he increases his income by his own exertions, they may double the increase.

Lady Britomart. Charles Lomax's exertions are much more likely to decrease his income than to increase it. Sarah will have to find at least another 800 pounds a year for the next ten years; and even then they will be as poor as church mice. And what about Barbara? I thought Barbara was going to make the most brilliant career of all of you. And what does she do? Joins the Salvation Army; discharges her maid; lives on a pound a week; and walks in one evening with a professor of Greek whom she has picked up in the street, and who pretends to be a Salvationist, and actually plays the big drum for her in public because he has fallen head over ears in love with her.

Stephen. I was certainly rather taken aback when I heard they were engaged. Cusins is a very nice fellow, certainly: nobody would ever guess that he was born in Australia; but —

4. Famous public (independent) boarding school for boys. School to eight former British prime ministers. Located in the town of Harrow in northwest London.

Lady Britomart. Oh, Adolphus Cusins will make a very good husband. After all, nobody can say a word against Greek: it stamps a man at once as an educated gentleman. And my family, thank Heaven, is not a pig-headed Tory one. We are Whigs[5], and believe in liberty. Let snobbish people say what they please: Barbara shall marry, not the man they like, but the man *I* like.

Stephen. Of course I was thinking only of his income. However, he is not likely to be extravagant.

Lady Britomart. Don't be too sure of that, Stephen. I know your quiet, simple, refined, poetic people like Adolphus — quite content with the best of everything! They cost more than your extravagant people, who are always as mean as they are second rate. No: Barbara will need at least 2000 pounds a year. You see it means two additional households. Besides, my dear, you must marry soon. I don't approve of the present fashion of philandering bachelors and late marriages; and I am trying to arrange something for you.

Stephen. It's very good of you, mother; but perhaps I had better arrange that for myself.

Lady Britomart. Nonsense! you are much too young to begin matchmaking: you would be taken in by some pretty little nobody. Of course I don't mean that you are not to be consulted: you know that as well as I do. [Stephen closes his lips and is silent]. Now don't sulk, Stephen.

Stephen. I am not sulking, mother. What has all this got to do with — with — with my father?

Lady Britomart. My dear Stephen: where is the money to come from? It is easy enough for you and the other children to live on my income as long as we are in the same house; but I can't keep four families in four separate houses. You know how poor my father is: he has barely seven thousand a year now; and really, if he were not the Earl of Stevenage, he would have to give up society. He can do nothing for us: he says, naturally enough, that it is absurd that he should be asked to provide for the children of a man who is rolling in money. You see, Stephen, your father must be fabulously wealthy, because there is always a war going on somewhere.

Stephen. You need not remind me of that, mother. I have hardly ever opened a newspaper in my life without seeing our name in it. The Undershaft torpedo! The Undershaft quick firers! The Undershaft ten inch! the Undershaft disappearing rampart gun! the Undershaft submarine! and now the Undershaft aerial battleship! At Harrow they called me the Woolwich Infant[6]. At Cambridge it was the same. A little brute at King's[7] who was always trying to get up revivals, spoilt my Bible — your first birthday present to me — by writing under my name, "Son and heir to Undershaft and Lazarus[8], Death and Destruction Dealers: address, Christendom and Judea." But that was not so bad as the way I was kowtowed to everywhere because my father was making millions by selling cannons.

Lady Britomart. It is not only the cannons, but the war loans that Lazarus arranges under cover of giving credit for the cannons. You know, Stephen, it's perfectly scandalous. Those two men, Andrew Undershaft and Lazarus, positively have Europe under their thumbs. That is why your father is able to behave as he does. He is above the law. Do you think Bismarck or Gladstone or Disraeli[9] could have openly defied every social and moral obligation all their lives as your father has? They simply wouldn't have dared. I asked Gladstone to take it up. I asked The Times to take it up. I asked the Lord Chamberlain

5. Names for political groups dating back to the 17th century; the Tories are now identified with the Conservatives, the Whigs with the Liberals.
6. A cannon weighing 35 tons, made at Woolich Arsenal in southeast London, considered nearly obsolete in 1905.
7. King's College, Cambridge.
8. An allusion to the partnership between the Christian Undershaft and the Jewish Lazarus. See Luke 16 for Lazarus, the poor man. Another biblical Lazarus was the man Christ raised from the dead in John 11:44.
9. Leading 19th-century statesmen: Prince Otto von Bismarck (1815-1998), Germany's "Iron Chancellor"; William Gladstone (1809-1998), leader of the Liberal Party and former Prime Minister; Benjamin Disraeli, 1st Earl of Beaconsfield (1804-1881), leader of the Conservative Party, also a former prime minister.

to take it up. But it was just like asking them to declare war on the Sultan. They WOULDN'T. They said they couldn't touch him. I believe they were afraid.

Stephen. What could they do? He does not actually break the law.

Lady Britomart. Not break the law! He is always breaking the law. He broke the law when he was born: his parents were not married.

Stephen. Mother! Is that true?

Lady Britomart. Of course it's true: that was why we separated.

Stephen. He married without letting you know this!

Lady Britomart [rather taken aback by this inference] Oh no. To do Andrew justice, that was not the sort of thing he did. Besides, you know the Undershaft motto: Unashamed. Everybody knew.

Stephen. But you said that was why you separated.

Lady Britomart. Yes, because he was not content with being a foundling himself: he wanted to disinherit you for another foundling. That was what I couldn't stand.

Stephen [ashamed] Do you mean for — for — for —

Lady Britomart. Don't stammer, Stephen. Speak distinctly.

Stephen. But this is so frightful to me, mother. To have to speak to you about such things!

Lady Britomart. It's not pleasant for me, either, especially if you are still so childish that you must make it worse by a display of embarrassment. It is only in the middle classes, Stephen, that people get into a state of dumb helpless horror when they find that there are wicked people in the world. In our class, we have to decide what is to be done with wicked people; and nothing should disturb our self possession. Now ask your question properly.

Stephen. Mother: you have no consideration for me. For Heaven's sake either treat me as a child, as you always do, and tell me nothing at all; or tell me everything and let me take it as best I can.

Lady Britomart. Treat you as a child! What do you mean? It is most unkind and ungrateful of you to say such a thing. You know I have never treated any of you as children. I have always made you my companions and friends, and allowed you perfect freedom to do and say whatever you liked, so long as you liked what I could approve of.

Stephen [desperately] I daresay we have been the very imperfect children of a very perfect mother; but I do beg you to let me alone for once, and tell me about this horrible business of my father wanting to set me aside for another son.

Lady Britomart [amazed] Another son! I never said anything of the kind. I never dreamt of such a thing. This is what comes of interrupting me.

Stephen. But you said —

Lady Britomart [cutting him short] Now be a good boy, Stephen, and listen to me patiently. The Undershafts are descended from a foundling[10] in the parish of St. Andrew Undershaft[11] in the city. That was long ago, in the reign of James the First[12]. Well, this foundling was adopted by an armorer and gun-maker. In the course of time the foundling succeeded to the business; and from some notion of gratitude, or some vow or something, he adopted another foundling, and left the business to him. And that foundling did the same. Ever since that, the cannon business has always been left to an adopted foundling named Andrew Undershaft.

Stephen. But did they never marry? Were there no legitimate sons?

Lady Britomart. Oh yes: they married just as your father did; and they were rich enough to buy land for their own children and leave them well provided for. But they always adopted and trained

10. An infant found after its unknown parents have deserted it, and usually presumed to be illegitimate.
11. St. Andrew Undershaft is a historic Church of England church in the City of London. It survived both the Great Fire of London (1666) and the Blitz.
12. King James VI of Scotland (1566-1625), James I of England after the Act of Union between Scotland and England in 1603.

some foundling to succeed them in the business; and of course they always quarrelled with their wives furiously over it. Your father was adopted in that way; and he pretends to consider himself bound to keep up the tradition and adopt somebody to leave the business to. Of course I was not going to stand that. There may have been some reason for it when the Undershafts could only marry women in their own class, whose sons were not fit to govern great estates. But there could be no excuse for passing over my son.

Stephen [dubiously] I am afraid I should make a poor hand of managing a cannon foundry.

Lady Britomart. Nonsense! you could easily get a manager and pay him a salary.

Stephen. My father evidently had no great opinion of my capacity.

Lady Britomart. Stuff, child! you were only a baby: it had nothing to do with your capacity. Andrew did it on principle, just as he did every perverse and wicked thing on principle. When my father remonstrated, Andrew actually told him to his face that history tells us of only two successful institutions: one the Undershaft firm, and the other the Roman Empire under the Antonines[13]. That was because the Antonine emperors all adopted their successors. Such rubbish! The Stevenages are as good as the Antonines, I hope; and you are a Stevenage. But that was Andrew all over. There you have the man! Always clever and unanswerable when he was defending nonsense and wickedness: always awkward and sullen when he had to behave sensibly and decently!

Stephen. Then it was on my account that your home life was broken up, mother. I am sorry.

Lady Britomart. Well, dear, there were other differences. I really cannot bear an immoral man. I am not a Pharisee[14], I hope; and I should not have minded his merely doing wrong things: we are none of us perfect. But your father didn’t exactly do wrong things: he said them and thought them: that was what was so dreadful. He really had a sort of religion of wrongness just as one doesn’t mind men practising immorality so long as they own that they are in the wrong by preaching morality; so I couldn’t forgive Andrew for preaching immorality while he practised morality. You would all have grown up without principles, without any knowledge of right and wrong, if he had been in the house. You know, my dear, your father was a very attractive man in some ways. Children did not dislike him; and he took advantage of it to put the wickedest ideas into their heads, and make them quite unmanageable. I did not dislike him myself: very far from it; but nothing can bridge over moral disagreement.

Stephen. All this simply bewilders me, mother. People may differ about matters of opinion, or even about religion; but how can they differ about right and wrong? Right is right; and wrong is wrong; and if a man cannot distinguish them properly, he is either a fool or a rascal: that’s all.

Lady Britomart [touched] That’s my own boy [she pats his cheek]! Your father never could answer that: he used to laugh and get out of it under cover of some affectionate nonsense. And now that you understand the situation, what do you advise me to do?

Stephen. Well, what can you do?

Lady Britomart. I must get the money somehow.

Stephen. We cannot take money from him. I had rather go and live in some cheap place like Bedford Square[15] or even Hampstead than take a farthing of his money.

Lady Britomart. But after all, Stephen, our present income comes from Andrew.

Stephen [shocked] I never knew that.

Lady Britomart. Well, you surely didn’t suppose your grandfather had anything to give me. The Stevenages could not do everything for you. We gave you social position. Andrew had to contribute something. He had a very good bargain, I think.

13. The Roman emperors Antoninus Pius (reigned 138-161) and his adopted son and heir Marcus Aurelius (reigned 161-180).
14. A self-righteous, hypocritical person, after the strict Pharisee sect in the New Testament.
15. Bedford Square and Hampstead were recently established "garden suburbs" of London, which would have been considered vulgar by the upper-class Stephen.

Stephen [bitterly] We are utterly dependent on him and his cannons, then!

Lady Britomart. Certainly not: the money is settled[16]. But he provided it. So you see it is not a question of taking money from him or not: it is simply a question of how much. I don't want any more for myself.

Stephen. Nor do I.

Lady Britomart. But Sarah does; and Barbara does. That is, Charles Lomax and Adolphus Cusins will cost them more. So I must put my pride in my pocket and ask for it, I suppose. That is your advice, Stephen, is it not?

Stephen. No.

Lady Britomart [sharply] Stephen!

Stephen. Of course if you are determined —

Lady Britomart. I am not determined: I ask your advice; and I am waiting for it. I will not have all the responsibility thrown on my shoulders.

Stephen [obstinately] I would die sooner than ask him for another penny.

Lady Britomart [resignedly] You mean that I must ask him. Very well, Stephen: It shall be as you wish. You will be glad to know that your grandfather concurs. But he thinks I ought to ask Andrew to come here and see the girls. After all, he must have some natural affection for them.

Stephen. Ask him here!!!

Lady Britomart. Do not repeat my words, Stephen. Where else can I ask him?

Stephen. I never expected you to ask him at all.

Lady Britomart. Now don't tease, Stephen. Come! you see that it is necessary that he should pay us a visit, don't you?

Stephen [reluctantly] I suppose so, if the girls cannot do without his money.

Lady Britomart. Thank you, Stephen: I knew you would give me the right advice when it was properly explained to you. I have asked your father to come this evening. [Stephen bounds from his seat] Don't jump, Stephen: it fidgets me.

Stephen [in utter consternation] Do you mean to say that my father is coming here to-night — that he may be here at any moment?

Lady Britomart [looking at her watch] I said nine. [He gasps. She rises]. Ring the bell, please. [Stephen goes to the smaller writing table; presses a button on it; and sits at it with his elbows on the table and his head in his hands, outwitted and overwhelmed]. It is ten minutes to nine yet; and I have to prepare the girls. I asked Charles Lomax and Adolphus to dinner on purpose that they might be here. Andrew had better see them in case he should cherish any delusions as to their being capable of supporting their wives. [The butler enters: Lady Britomart goes behind the settee to speak to him]. Morrison: go up to the drawingroom and tell everybody to come down here at once. [Morrison withdraws. Lady Britomart turns to Stephen]. Now remember, Stephen, I shall need all your countenance and authority. [He rises and tries to recover some vestige of these attributes]. Give me a chair, dear. [He pushes a chair forward from the wall to where she stands, near the smaller writing table. She sits down; and he goes to the armchair, into which he throws himself]. I don't know how Barbara will take it. Ever since they made her a major in the Salvation Army she has developed a propensity to have her own way and order people about which quite cows me sometimes. It's not ladylike: I'm sure I don't know where she picked it up. Anyhow, Barbara shan't bully me; but still it's just as well that your father should be here before she has time to refuse to meet him or make a fuss. Don't look nervous, Stephen, it will only encourage Barbara to make difficulties. I am nervous enough, goodness knows; but I don't show it.

Sarah and Barbara come in with their respective young men, Charles Lomax and Adolphus Cusins. Sarah is slender, bored, and mundane. Barbara is robuster, jollier, much more energetic. Sarah is

16. Undershaft relinquished control over this money in a marriage settlement before marrying Lady B.

fashionably dressed: Barbara is in Salvation Army uniform. Lomax, a young man about town, is like many other young men about town. He is affected with a frivolous sense of humor which plunges him at the most inopportune moments into paroxysms of imperfectly suppressed laughter. Cusins is a spectacled student, slight, thin haired, and sweet voiced, with a more complex form of Lomax's complaint. His sense of humor is intellectual and subtle, and is complicated by an appalling temper. The lifelong struggle of a benevolent temperament and a high conscience against impulses of inhuman ridicule and fierce impatience has set up a chronic strain which has visibly wrecked his constitution. He is a most implacable, determined, tenacious, intolerant person who by mere force of character presents himself as — and indeed actually is — considerate, gentle, explanatory, even mild and apologetic, capable possibly of murder, but not of cruelty or coarseness. By the operation of some instinct which is not merciful enough to blind him with the illusions of love, he is obstinately bent on marrying Barbara. Lomax likes Sarah and thinks it will be rather a lark to marry her. Consequently he has not attempted to resist Lady Britomart's arrangements to that end.

All four look as if they had been having a good deal of fun in the drawingroom. The girls enter first, leaving the swains[17] outside. Sarah comes to the settee. Barbara comes in after her and stops at the door.

Barbara. Are Cholly and Dolly to come in?

Lady Britomart [forcibly] Barbara: I will not have Charles called Cholly: the vulgarity of it positively makes me ill.

Barbara. It's all right, mother. Cholly is quite correct nowadays. Are they to come in?

Lady Britomart. Yes, if they will behave themselves.

Barbara [through the door] Come in, Dolly, and behave yourself.

Barbara comes to her mother's writing table. Cusins enters smiling, and wanders towards Lady Britomart.

Sarah [calling] Come in, Cholly. [Lomax enters, controlling his features very imperfectly, and places himself vaguely between Sarah and Barbara].

Lady Britomart [peremptorily] Sit down, all of you. [They sit. Cusins crosses to the window and seats himself there. Lomax takes a chair. Barbara sits at the writing table and Sarah on the settee]. I don't in the least know what you are laughing at, Adolphus. I am surprised at you, though I expected nothing better from Charles Lomax.

Cusins [in a remarkably gentle voice] Barbara has been trying to teach me the West Ham[18] Salvation March.

Lady Britomart. I see nothing to laugh at in that; nor should you if you are really converted.

Cusins [sweetly] You were not present. It was really funny, I believe.

Lomax. Ripping.

Lady Britomart. Be quiet, Charles. Now listen to me, children. Your father is coming here this evening. [General stupefaction].

Lomax [remonstrating] Oh I say!

Lady Britomart. You are not called on to say anything, Charles.

Sarah. Are you serious, mother?

Lady Britomart. Of course I am serious. It is on your account, Sarah, and also on Charles's. [Silence. Charles looks painfully unworthy]. I hope you are not going to object, Barbara.

Barbara. I! why should I? My father has a soul to be saved like anybody else. He's quite welcome as far as I am concerned. [She sits on the table , and softly whistles 'Onward Christian Soldiers'[19]]

Lomax [still remonstrant] But really, don't you know! Oh I say!

17. Male admirers or suitors, used facetiously here.

18. Working-class district in London's East End.

19. Popular hymn, with lyrics by Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924) and music by Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900).

Lady Britomart [frigidly] What do you wish to convey, Charles?

Lomax. Well, you must admit that this is a bit thick.

Lady Britomart [turning with ominous suavity to Cusins] Adolphus: you are a professor of Greek. Can you translate Charles Lomax's remarks into reputable English for us?

Cusins [cautiously] If I may say so, Lady Brit, I think Charles has rather happily expressed what we all feel. Homer, speaking of Autolycus[20], uses the same phrase.

Lomax [handsomely] Not that I mind, you know, if Sarah don't.

Lady Britomart [crushingly] Thank you. Have I your permission, Adolphus, to invite my own husband to my own house?

Cusins [gallantly] You have my unhesitating support in everything you do.

Lady Britomart. Sarah: have you nothing to say?

Sarah. Do you mean that he is coming regularly to live here?

Lady Britomart. Certainly not. The spare room is ready for him if he likes to stay for a day or two and see a little more of you; but there are limits.

Sarah. Well, he can't eat us, I suppose. I don't mind.

Lomax [chuckling] I wonder how the old man will take it.

Lady Britomart. Much as the old woman will, no doubt, Charles.

Lomax [abashed] I didn't mean — at least —

Lady Britomart. You didn't think, Charles. You never do; and the result is, you never mean anything. And now please attend to me, children. Your father will be quite a stranger to us.

Lomax. I suppose he hasn't seen Sarah since she was a little kid.

Lady Britomart. Not since she was a little kid, Charles, as you express it with that elegance of diction and refinement of thought that seem never to desert you. Accordingly — er — [impatiently] Now I have forgotten what I was going to say. That comes of your provoking me to be sarcastic, Charles. Adolphus: will you kindly tell me where I was.

Cusins [sweetly] You were saying that as Mr Undershaft has not seen his children since they were babies, he will form his opinion of the way you have brought them up from their behavior to-night, and that therefore you wish us all to be particularly careful to conduct ourselves well, especially Charles.

Lomax. Look here: Lady Brit didn't say that.

Lady Britomart [vehemently] I did, Charles. Adolphus's recollection is perfectly correct. It is most important that you should be good; and I do beg you for once not to pair off into opposite corners and giggle and whisper while I am speaking to your father.

Barbara. All right, mother. We'll do you credit.

Lady Britomart. Remember, Charles, that Sarah will want to feel proud of you instead of ashamed of you.

Lomax. Oh I say! There's nothing to be exactly proud of, don't you know.

Lady Britomart. Well, try and look as if there was.

Morrison, pale and dismayed, breaks into the room in unconcealed disorder.

Morrison. Might I speak a word to you, my lady?

Lady Britomart. Nonsense! Show him up.

Morrison. Yes, my lady. [He goes].

Lomax. Does Morrison know who he is?

Lady Britomart. Of course. Morrison has always been with us.

Lomax. It must be a regular corker[21] for him, don't you know.

20. See *The Iliad*, Book 10. Autolycus, a thief, goes to a "thick" or strongly fortified house.

21. Slang. Something that closes a discussion...a thing one cannot get over. Hence something very striking or astonishing.

Lady Britomart. Is this a moment to get on my nerves, Charles, with your outrageous expressions?

Lomax. But this is something out of the ordinary, really —

Morrison [at the door] The — er — Mr Undershaft. [He retreats in confusion].

Andrew Undershaft comes in. All rise. Lady Britomart meets him in the middle of the room behind the settee.

Andrew is, on the surface, a stoutish, easygoing elderly man, with kindly patient manners, and an engaging simplicity of character. But he has a watchful, deliberate, waiting, listening face, and formidable reserves of power, both bodily and mental, in his capacious chest and long head. His gentleness is partly that of a strong man who has learnt by experience that his natural grip hurts ordinary people unless he handles them very carefully, and partly the mellowness of age and success. He is also a little shy in his present very delicate situation.

Lady Britomart. Good evening, Andrew.

Undershaft. How d'ye do, my dear.

Lady Britomart. You look a good deal older.

Undershaft [apologetically] I AM somewhat older. [With a touch of courtship] Time has stood still with you.

Lady Britomart [promptly] Rubbish! This is your family.

Undershaft [surprised] Is it so large? I am sorry to say my memory is failing very badly in some things. [He offers his hand with paternal kindness to Lomax].

Lomax [jerkily shaking his hand] Ahdedoo.

Undershaft. I can see you are my eldest. I am very glad to meet you again, my boy.

Lomax [remonstrating] No but look here don't you know —[Overcome] Oh I say!

Lady Britomart [recovering from momentary speechlessness] Andrew: do you mean to say that you don't remember how many children you have?

Undershaft. Well, I am afraid I—. They have grown so much — er. Am I making any ridiculous mistake? I may as well confess: I recollect only one son. But so many things have happened since, of course — er —

Lady Britomart [decisively] Andrew: you are talking nonsense. Of course you have only one son.

Undershaft. Perhaps you will be good enough to introduce me, my dear.

Lady Britomart. That is Charles Lomax, who is engaged to Sarah.

Undershaft. My dear sir, I beg your pardon.

Lomax. Not at all. Delighted, I assure you.

Lady Britomart. This is Stephen.

Undershaft [bowing] Happy to make your acquaintance, Mr Stephen. Then [going to Cusins] you must be my son. [Taking Cusins' hands in his] How are you, my young friend? [To Lady Britomart] He is very like you, my love.

Cusins. You flatter me, Mr Undershaft. My name is Cusins: engaged to Barbara. [Very explicitly] That is Major Barbara Undershaft, of the Salvation Army. That is Sarah, your second daughter. This is Stephen Undershaft, your son.

Undershaft. My dear Stephen, I beg your pardon.

Stephen. Not at all.

Undershaft. Mr Cusins: I am much indebted to you for explaining so precisely. [Turning to Sarah] Barbara, my dear —

Sarah [prompting him] Sarah.

Undershaft. Sarah, of course. [They shake hands. He goes over to Barbara] Barbara — I am right this time, I hope.

Barbara. Quite right. [They shake hands].

Lady Britomart [resuming command] Sit down, all of you. Sit down, Andrew. [She comes forward and sits on the settle. Cusins also brings his chair forward on her left. Barbara and Stephen resume their seats. Lomax gives his chair to Sarah and goes for another].

Undershaft. Thank you, my love.

Lomax [conversationally, as he brings a chair forward between the writing table and the settee, and offers it to Undershaft] Takes you some time to find out exactly where you are, don't it?

Undershaft [accepting the chair] That is not what embarrasses me, Mr Lomax. My difficulty is that if I play the part of a father, I shall produce the effect of an intrusive stranger; and if I play the part of a discreet stranger, I may appear a callous father.

Lady Britomart. There is no need for you to play any part at all, Andrew. You had much better be sincere and natural.

Undershaft [submissively] Yes, my dear: I daresay that will be best. [Making himself comfortable] Well, here I am. Now what can I do for you all?

Lady Britomart. You need not do anything, Andrew. You are one of the family. You can sit with us and enjoy yourself.

Lomax's too long suppressed mirth explodes in agonized neighings.

Lady Britomart [outraged] Charles Lomax: if you can behave yourself, behave yourself. If not, leave the room.

Lomax. I'm awfully sorry, Lady Brit; but really, you know, upon my soul! [He sits on the settee between Lady Britomart and Undershaft, quite overcome].

Barbara. Why don't you laugh if you want to, Cholly? It's good for your inside.

Lady Britomart. Barbara: you have had the education of a lady. Please let your father see that; and don't talk like a street girl.

Undershaft. Never mind me, my dear. As you know, I am not a gentleman; and I was never educated.

Lomax [encouragingly] Nobody'd know it, I assure you. You look all right, you know.

Cusins. Let me advise you to study Greek, Mr Undershaft. Greek scholars are privileged men. Few of them know Greek; and none of them know anything else; but their position is unchallengeable. Other languages are the qualifications of waiters and commercial travellers: Greek is to a man of position what the hallmark[22] is to silver.

Barbara. Dolly: don't be insincere. Cholly: fetch your concertina and play something for us.

Lomax [doubtfully to Undershaft] Perhaps that sort of thing isn't in your line, eh?

Undershaft. I am particularly fond of music.

Lomax [delighted] Are you? Then I'll get it. [He goes upstairs for the instrument].

Undershaft. Do you play, Barbara?

Barbara. Only the tambourine. But Cholly's teaching me the concertina.

Undershaft. Is Cholly also a member of the Salvation Army?

Barbara. No: he says it's bad form to be a dissenter[23]. But I don't despair of Cholly. I made him come yesterday to a meeting at the dock gates, and take the collection in his hat.

Lady Britomart. It is not my doing, Andrew. Barbara is old enough to take her own way. She has no father to advise her.

Barbara. Oh yes she has. There are no orphans in the Salvation Army.

Undershaft. Your father there has a great many children and plenty of experience, eh?

Barbara [looking at him with quick interest and nodding] Just so. How did you come to understand that? [Lomax is heard at the door trying the concertina].

22. Originally, "Hall Mark," the official mark stamped on gold and silver articles to attest their purity, done at the Goldsmith's Hall.

23. Member of any nonconformist Protestant body, such as the Salvation Army, that dissents from the doctrines of the Church of England.

Lady Britomart. Come in, Charles. Play us something at once.

Lomax. Righto! [He sits down in his former place, and preludes].

Undershaft. One moment, Mr Lomax. I am rather interested in the Salvation Army. Its motto might be my own: Blood and Fire[24].

Lomax [shocked] But not your sort of blood and fire, you know.

Undershaft. My sort of blood cleanses: my sort of fire purifies.

Barbara. So do ours. Come down to-morrow to my shelter — the West Ham shelter — and see what we're doing. We're going to march to a great meeting in the Assembly Hall at Mile End. Come and see the shelter and then march with us: it will do you a lot of good. Can you play anything?

Undershaft. In my youth I earned pennies, and even shillings occasionally, in the streets and in public house parlors by my natural talent for stepdancing. Later on, I became a member of the Undershaft orchestral society, and performed passably on the tenor trombone.

Lomax [scandalized] Oh I say!

Barbara. Many a sinner has played himself into heaven on the trombone, thanks to the Army.

Lomax [to Barbara, still rather shocked] Yes; but what about the cannon business, don't you know? [To Undershaft] Getting into heaven is not exactly in your line, is it?

Lady Britomart. Charles!!!

Lomax. Well; but it stands to reason, don't it? The cannon business may be necessary and all that: we can't get on without cannons; but it isn't right, you know. On the other hand, there may be a certain amount of tosh about the Salvation Army — I belong to the Established Church myself — but still you can't deny that it's religion; and you can't go against religion, can you? At least unless you're downright immoral, don't you know.

Undershaft. You hardly appreciate my position, Mr Lomax —

Lomax [hastily] I'm not saying anything against you personally, you know.

Undershaft. Quite so, quite so. But consider for a moment. Here I am, a manufacturer of mutilation and murder. I find myself in a specially amiable humor just now because, this morning, down at the foundry, we blew twenty-seven dummy soldiers into fragments with a gun which formerly destroyed only thirteen.

Lomax [leniently] Well, the more destructive war becomes, the sooner it will be abolished, eh?

Undershaft. Not at all. The more destructive war becomes the more fascinating we find it. No, Mr Lomax, I am obliged to you for making the usual excuse for my trade; but I am not ashamed of it. I am not one of those men who keep their morals and their business in watertight compartments. All the spare money my trade rivals spend on hospitals, cathedrals and other receptacles for conscience money, I devote to experiments and researches in improved methods of destroying life and property. I have always done so; and I always shall. Therefore your Christmas card moralities of peace on earth and goodwill among men are of no use to me. Your Christianity, which enjoins you to resist not evil, and to turn the other cheek, would make me a bankrupt. My morality — my religion — must have a place for cannons and torpedoes in it.

Stephen [coldly — almost sullenly] You speak as if there were half a dozen moralities and religions to choose from, instead of one true morality and one true religion.

Undershaft. For me there is only one true morality; but it might not fit you, as you do not manufacture aerial battleships. There is only one true morality for every man; but every man has not the same true morality.

Lomax [overtaxed] Would you mind saying that again? I didn't quite follow it.

24. "Through Blood and Fire," the motto of the Salvation Army, alludes to the redeeming blood of Christ and the purifying fire of the Holy Spirit.

Cusins. It's quite simple. As Euripides says, one man's meat is another man's poison morally as well as physically.

Undershaft. Precisely.

Lomax. Oh, that. Yes, yes, yes. True. True.

Stephen. In other words, some men are honest and some are scoundrels.

Barbara. Bosh. There are no scoundrels.

Undershaft. Indeed? Are there any good men?

Barbara. No. Not one. There are neither good men nor scoundrels: there are just children of one Father; and the sooner they stop calling one another names the better. You needn't talk to me: I know them. I've had scores of them through my hands: scoundrels, criminals, infidels, philanthropists, missionaries, county councillors, all sorts. They're all just the same sort of sinner; and there's the same salvation ready for them all.

Undershaft. May I ask have you ever saved a maker of cannons?

Barbara. No. Will you let me try?

Undershaft. Well, I will make a bargain with you. If I go to see you to-morrow in your Salvation Shelter, will you come the day after to see me in my cannon works?

Barbara. Take care. It may end in your giving up the cannons for the sake of the Salvation Army.

Undershaft. Are you sure it will not end in your giving up the Salvation Army for the sake of the cannons?

Barbara. I will take my chance of that.

Undershaft. And I will take my chance of the other. [They shake hands on it]. Where is your shelter?

Barbara. In West Ham. At the sign of the cross. Ask anybody in Canning Town[25]. Where are your works?

Undershaft. In Perivale St Andrews[26]. At the sign of the sword. Ask anybody in Europe.

Lomax. Hadn't I better play something?

Barbara. Yes. Give us Onward, Christian Soldiers.

Lomax. Well, that's rather a strong order to begin with, don't you know. Suppose I sing Thou'rt passing hence, my brother[27]. It's much the same tune.

Barbara. It's too melancholy. You get saved, Cholly; and you'll pass hence, my brother, without making such a fuss about it.

Lady Britomart. Really, Barbara, you go on as if religion were a pleasant subject. Do have some sense of propriety.

Undershaft. I do not find it an unpleasant subject, my dear. It is the only one that capable people really care for.

Lady Britomart [looking at her watch] Well, if you are determined to have it, I insist on having it in a proper and respectable way. Charles: ring for prayers[28]. [General amazement. Stephen rises in dismay].

Lomax [rising] Oh I say!

Undershaft [rising] I am afraid I must be going.

Lady Britomart. You cannot go now, Andrew: it would be most improper. Sit down. What will the servants think?

Undershaft. My dear: I have conscientious scruples. May I suggest a compromise? If Barbara will

25. District of east London, near West Ham.
26. Perivale is a London suburb in the borough of Ealing.
27. Poem by Felicia Hemans (1783-1835). As with "Onward Christian Soldiers," it too was set to music by Arthur Sullivan.
28. According to Nicholas Grene, "to ring for prayers" was to summon the servants to the family gathering for prayers (customary in some upper-class households)" (*Major Barbara*, London: Methuen, 2008, p. 30.)

conduct a little service in the drawingroom, with Mr Lomax as organist, I will attend it willingly. I will even take part, if a trombone can be procured.

Lady Britomart. Don't mock, Andrew.

Undershaft [shocked — to Barbara] You don't think I am mocking, my love, I hope.

Barbara. No, of course not; and it wouldn't matter if you were: half the Army came to their first meeting for a lark. [Rising] Come along. Come, Dolly. Come, Cholly. [She goes out with Undershaft, who opens the door for her. Cusins rises].

Lady Britomart. I will not be disobeyed by everybody. Adolphus: sit down. Charles: you may go. You are not fit for prayers: you cannot keep your countenance.

Lomax. Oh I say! [He goes out].

Lady Britomart [continuing] But you, Adolphus, can behave yourself if you choose to. I insist on your staying.

Cusins. My dear Lady Brit: there are things in the family prayer book that I couldn't bear to hear you say.

Lady Britomart. What things, pray?

Cusins. Well, you would have to say before all the servants that we have done things we ought not to have done, and left undone things we ought to have done, and that there is no health in us. I cannot bear to hear you doing yourself such an unjustice, and Barbara such an injustice. As for myself, I flatly deny it: I have done my best. I shouldn't dare to marry Barbara — I couldn't look you in the face — if it were true. So I must go to the drawingroom.

Lady Britomart [offended] Well, go. [He starts for the door]. And remember this, Adolphus [he turns to listen]: I have a very strong suspicion that you went to the Salvation Army to worship Barbara and nothing else. And I quite appreciate the very clever way in which you systematically humbug me. I have found you out. Take care Barbara doesn't. That's all.

Cusins [with unruffled sweetness] Don't tell on me. [He goes out].

Lady Britomart. Sarah: if you want to go, go. Anything's better than to sit there as if you wished you were a thousand miles away.

Sarah [languidly] Very well, mamma. [She goes].

Lady Britomart, with a sudden flounce, gives way to a little gust of tears.

Stephen [going to her] Mother: what's the matter?

Lady Britomart [swishing away her tears with her handkerchief] Nothing. Foolishness. You can go with him, too, if you like, and leave me with the servants.

Stephen. Oh, you mustn't think that, mother. I— I don't like him.

Lady Britomart. The others do. That is the injustice of a woman's lot. A woman has to bring up her children; and that means to restrain them, to deny them things they want, to set them tasks, to punish them when they do wrong, to do all the unpleasant things. And then the father, who has nothing to do but pet them and spoil them, comes in when all her work is done and steals their affection from her.

Stephen. He has not stolen our affection from you. It is only curiosity.

Lady Britomart [violently] I won't be consoled, Stephen. There is nothing the matter with me. [She rises and goes towards the door].

Stephen. Where are you going, mother?

Lady Britomart. To the drawingroom, of course. [She goes out. Onward, Christian Soldiers, on the concertina, with tambourine accompaniment, is heard when the door opens]. Are you coming, Stephen?

Stephen. No. Certainly not. [She goes. He sits down on the settee, with compressed lips and an expression of strong dislike].

86.

Major Barbara: Act II

George Bernard Shaw

The yard of the West Ham shelter of the Salvation Army is a cold place on a January morning. The building itself, an old warehouse, is newly whitewashed. Its gabled end projects into the yard in the middle, with a door on the ground floor, and another in the loft above it without any balcony or ladder, but with a pulley rigged over it for hoisting sacks. Those who come from this central gable end into the yard have the gateway leading to the street on their left, with a stone horse-trough just beyond it, and, on the right, a penthouse shielding a table from the weather. There are forms[1] at the table; and on them are seated a man and a woman, both much down on their luck, finishing a meal of bread [one thick slice each, with margarine and golden syrup] and diluted milk.

The man, a workman out of employment, is young, agile, a talker, a poser, sharp enough to be capable of anything in reason except honesty or altruistic considerations of any kind. The woman is a commonplace old bundle of poverty and hard-worn humanity. She looks sixty and probably is forty-five. If they were rich people, gloved and muffed and well wrapped up in furs and overcoats, they would be numbed and miserable; for it is a grindingly cold, raw, January day; and a glance at the background of grimy warehouses and leaden sky visible over the whitewashed walls of the yard would drive any idle rich person straight to the Mediterranean. But these two, being no more troubled with visions of the Mediterranean than of the moon, and being compelled to keep more of their clothes in the pawnshop, and less on their persons, in winter than in summer, are not depressed by the cold: rather are they stung into vivacity, to which their meal has just now given an almost jolly turn. The man takes a pull at his mug, and then gets up and moves about the yard with his hands deep in his pockets, occasionally breaking into a stepdance.

The Woman. Feel better arter[2] your meal, sir?

The Man. No. Call that a meal! Good enough for you, praps; but wot is it to me, an intelligent workin man.

The Woman. Workin man! Wot are you?

The Man. Painter.

The Woman [sceptically] Yus, I dessay.

The Man. Yus, you dessay! I know. Every loafer that can’t do nothink calls isself a painter. Well, I’m a real painter: grainer, finisher, thirty-eight bob a week when I can get it.

The Woman. Then why don’t you go and get it?

The Man. I’ll tell you why. Fust: I’m intelligent — fffff! it’s rotten cold here [he dances a step or two]— yes: intelligent beyond the station o life into which it has pleased the capitalists to call me; and they don’t like a man that sees through em. Second, an intelligent bein needs a doo share of appiness; so I drink somethink cruel when I get the chawnce. Third, I stand by my class and do as little as I can so’s to leave arf the job for me fellow workers. Fourth, I’m fly[3] enough to know wots inside the law and

1. Benches.
2. After.
3. Clever.

wots outside it; and inside it I do as the capitalists do: pinch wot I can lay me ands on. In a proper state of society I am sober, industrious and honest: in Rome, so to speak, I do as the Romans do. Wots the consequence? When trade is bad — and it's rotten bad just now — and the employers az to sack arf their men, they generally start on me.

The Woman. What's your name?

The Man. Price. Bronterre O'Brien Price[4]. Usually called Snobby Price, for short.

The Woman. Snobby's a carpenter, ain't it? You said you was a painter.

Price. Not that kind of snob, but the genteel sort. I'm too uppish, owing to my intelligence, and my father being a Chartist[5] and a reading, thinking man: a stationer, too. I'm none of your common hewers of wood and drawers of water; and don't you forget it. [He returns to his seat at the table, and takes up his mug]. Wots YOUR name?

The Woman. Rummy Mitchens, sir.

Price [quaffing the remains of his milk to her] Your elth, Miss Mitchens.

Rummy [correcting him] Missis Mitchens.

Price. Wot! Oh Rummy, Rummy! Respectable married woman, Rummy, gittin rescued by the Salvation Army by pretendin to be a bad un. Same old game!

Rummy. What am I to do? I can't starve. Them Salvation lasses is dear good girls; but the better you are, the worse they likes to think you were before they rescued you. Why shouldn't they av a bit o credit, poor loves? They're worn to rags by their work. And where would they get the money to rescue us if we was to let on we're no worse than other people? You know what ladies and gentlemen are.

Price. Thievin swine! Wish I ad their job, Rummy, all the same. Wot does Rummy stand for? Pet name props?

Rummy. Short for Romola.

Price. For wot!?

Rummy. Romola. It was out of a new book[6]. Somebody me mother wanted me to grow up like.

Price. We're companions in misfortune, Rummy. Both on us got names that nobody cawnt pronounce. Consequently I'm Snobby and you're Rummy because Bill and Sally wasn't good enough for our parents. Such is life!

Rummy. Who saved you, Mr. Price? Was it Major Barbara?

Price. No: I come here on my own. I'm goin to be Bronterre O'Brien Price, the converted painter. I know wot they like. I'll tell em how I blasphemed and gambled and wopped my poor old mother —

Rummy [shocked] Used you to beat your mother?

Price. Not likely. She used to beat me. No matter: you come and listen to the converted painter, and you'll hear how she was a pious woman that taught me me prayers at er knee, an how I used to come home drunk and drag her out o bed be er snow white airs, an lam into er with the poker.

Rummy. That's what's so unfair to us women. Your confessions is just as big lies as ours: you don't tell what you really done no more than us; but you men can tell your lies right out at the meetins and be made much of for it; while the sort o confessions we az to make az to be wispered to one lady at a time. It ain't right, spite of all their piety.

Price. Right! Do you spose the Army'd be allowed if it went and did right? Not much. It combs our air and makes us good little blokes to be robbed and put upon. But I'll play the game as good as any of em. I'll see somebody struck by lightnin, or hear a voice sayin "Snobby Price: where will you spend eternity?" I'll ave a time of it, I tell you.

4. Price was named after James Bronterre O'Brien (1805-1964), an Irish journalist and Chartist leader.
5. Chartism was a workng-class movement beginnng in 1837, whose six demands were listed in *The People's Charter* of 1838. Their demands included manhood suffrage, vote by ballot, and abolition of property qualification for MPs.
6. *Romola* (1863). A novel by George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans).

Rummy. You won't be let drink, though.

Price. I'll take it out in gorspellin[7], then. I don't want to drink if I can get fun enough any other way.

Jenny Hill, a pale, overwrought, pretty Salvation lass of 18, comes in through the yard gate, leading Peter Shirley, a half hardened, half worn-out elderly man, weak with hunger.

Jenny [supporting him] Come! pluck up. I'll get you something to eat. You'll be all right then.

Price [rising and hurrying officiously to take the old man off Jenny's hands] Poor old man! Cheer up, brother: you'll find rest and peace and appiness ere. Hurry up with the food, miss: e's fair done. [Jenny hurries into the shelter]. Ere, buck up, daddy! She's fetchin y'a thick slice o breadn treacle, an a mug o skyblue[8]. [He seats him at the corner of the table].

Rummy [gaily] Keep up your old art! Never say die!

Shirley. I'm not an old man. I'm ony 46. I'm as good as ever I was. The grey patch come in my hair before I was thirty. All it wants is three pennorth o hair dye: am I to be turned on the streets to starve for it? Holy God! I've worked ten to twelve hours a day since I was thirteen, and paid my way all through; and now am I to be thrown into the gutter and my job given to a young man that can do it no better than me because I've black hair that goes white at the first change?

Price [cheerfully] No good jawrin[9] about it. You're ony a jumped-up, jerked-off, orspittle[10]-turned-out incurable of an ole workin man: who cares about you? Eh? Make the thievin swine give you a meal: they've stole many a one from you. Get a bit o your own back. [Jenny returns with the usual meal]. There you are, brother. Awsk a blessin an tuck that into you.

Shirley [looking at it ravenously but not touching it, and crying like a child] I never took anything before.

Jenny [petting him] Come, come! the Lord sends it to you: he wasn't above taking bread from his friends; and why should you be? Besides, when we find you a job you can pay us for it if you like.

Shirley [eagerly] Yes, yes: that's true. I can pay you back: it's only a loan. [Shivering] Oh Lord! oh Lord! [He turns to the table and attacks the meal ravenously].

Jenny. Well, Rummy, are you more comfortable now?

Rummy. God bless you, lovey! You've fed my body and saved my soul, haven't you? [Jenny, touched, kisses her] Sit down and rest a bit: you must be ready to drop.

Jenny. I've been going hard since morning. But there's more work than we can do. I mustn't stop.

Rummy. Try a prayer for just two minutes. You'll work all the better after.

Jenny [her eyes lighting up] Oh isn't it wonderful how a few minutes prayer revives you! I was quite lightheaded at twelve o'clock, I was so tired; but Major Barbara just sent me to pray for five minutes; and I was able to go on as if I had only just begun. [To Price] Did you have a piece of bread?

Paige [with unction] Yes, miss; but I've got the piece that I value more; and that's the peace that passeth hall hannerstennin[11].

Rummy [fervently] Glory Hallelujah!

Bill Walker, a rough customer of about 25, appears at the yard gate and looks malevolently at Jenny.

Jenny. That makes me so happy. When you say that, I feel wicked for loitering here. I must get to work again.

She is hurrying to the shelter, when the new-comer moves quickly up to the door and intercepts her. His manner is so threatening that she retreats as he comes at her truculently, driving her down the yard.

Bill. I know you. You're the one that took away my girl. You're the one that set er agen me. Well, I'm

7. Gospelling, preaching.
8. Skimmed milk.
9. Jawing, talking.
10. Hospital. Turned away by the hospitals.
11. "The peace of God which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

goin to av er out[12]. Not that I care a curse for her or you: see? But I'll let er know; and I'll let you know. I'm goin to give er a doin that'll teach er to cut away from me. Now in with you and tell er to come out afore I come in and kick er out. Tell er Bill Walker wants er. She'll know what that means; and if she keeps me waitin it'll be worse. You stop to jaw back at me; and I'll start on you: d'ye hear? There's your way. In you go. [He takes her by the arm and slings her towards the door of the shelter. She falls on her hand and knee. Rummy helps her up again].

Price [rising, and venturing irresolutely towards Bill]. Easy there, mate. She ain't doin you no arm.

Bill. Who are you callin mate? [Standing over him threateningly]. You're goin to stand up for her, are you? Put up your ands.

Rummy [running indignantly to him to scold him]. Oh, you great brute — [He instantly swings his left hand back against her face. She screams and reels back to the trough, where she sits down, covering her bruised face with her hands and rocking and moaning with pain].

Jenny [going to her]. Oh God forgive you! How could you strike an old woman like that?

Bill [seizing her by the hair so violently that she also screams, and tearing her away from the old woman]. You Gawd forgive me again and I'll Gawd forgive you one on the jaw that'll stop you prayin for a week. [Holding her and turning fiercely on Price]. Av you anything to say agen it? Eh?

Price [intimidated]. No, matey: she ain't anything to do with me.

Bill. Good job for you! I'd put two meals into you and fight you with one finger after, you starved cur. [To Jenny] Now are you goin to fetch out Mog Habbijam[13]; or am I to knock your face off you and fetch her myself?

Jenny [writhing in his grasp] Oh please someone go in and tell Major Barbara —[she screams again as he wrenches her head down; and Price and Rummy, flee into the shelter].

Bill. You want to go in and tell your Major of me, do you?

Jenny. Oh please don't drag my hair. Let me go.

Bill. Do you or don't you? [She stifles a scream]. Yes or no.

Jenny. God give me strength —

Bill [striking her with his fist in the face] Go and show her that, and tell her if she wants one like it to come and interfere with me. [Jenny, crying with pain, goes into the shed. He goes to the form and addresses the old man]. Here: finish your mess; and get out o my way.

Shirley [springing up and facing him fiercely, with the mug in his hand] You take a liberty with me, and I'll smash you over the face with the mug and cut your eye out. Ain't you satisfied — young whelps like you — with takin the bread out o the mouths of your elders that have brought you up and slaved for you, but you must come shovin and cheekin and bullyin in here, where the bread o charity is sickenin in our stummicks?

Bill [contemptuously, but backing a little] Wot good are you, you old palsy mug? Wot good are you?

Shirley. As good as you and better. I'll do a day's work agen you or any fat young soaker of your age. Go and take my job at Horrockses[14], where I worked for ten year. They want young men there: they can't afford to keep men over forty-five. They're very sorry — give you a character[15] and happy to help you to get anything suited to your years — sure a steady man won't be long out of a job. Well, let em try you. They'll find the differ. What do you know? Not as much as how to beeyave yourself — layin your dirty fist across the mouth of a respectable woman!

Bill. Don't provoke me to lay it acrost yours: d'ye hear?

12. That is, have her out of the shelter.

13. The name of Walker's girlfriend. Possibly Maude Havisham or Haversham.

14. Horrocks, a cotton mill in Preston, Lancashire.

15. Letter of reference.

Shirley [with blighting contempt] Yes: you like an old man to hit, don't you, when you've finished with the women. I ain't seen you hit a young one yet.

Bill [stung] You lie, you old soupkitchener, you. There was a young man here. Did I offer to hit him or did I not?

Shirley. Was he starvin or was he not? Was he a man or only a crosseyed thief an a loafer? Would you hit my son-in-law's brother?

Bill. Who's he?

Shirley. Todger Fairmile o Balls Pond[16]. Him that won 20 pounds off the Japanese wrastler at the music hall by standin out 17 minutes 4 seconds agen him.

Bill [sullenly] I'm no music hall wrastler. Can he box?

Shirley. Yes: an you can't.

Bill. Wot! I can't, can't I? Wot's that you say [threatening him]?

Shirley [not budging an inch] Will you box Todger Fairmile if I put him on to you? Say the word.

Bill. [subsiding with a slouch] I'll stand up to any man alive, if he was ten Todger Fairmiles. But I don't set up to be a perfessional.

Shirley [looking down on him with unfathomable disdain] YOU box! Slap an old woman with the back o your hand! You hadn't even the sense to hit her where a magistrate couldn't see the mark of it, you silly young lump of conceit and ignorance. Hit a girl in the jaw and ony make her cry! If Todger Fairmile'd done it, she wouldn't a got up inside o ten minutes, no more than you would if he got on to you. Yah! I'd set about you myself if I had a week's feedin in me instead o two months starvation. [He returns to the table to finish his meal].

Bill [following him and stooping over him to drive the taunt in] You lie! you have the bread and treacle in you that you come here to beg.

Shirley [bursting into tears] Oh God! it's true: I'm only an old pauper on the scrap heap. [Furiously] But you'll come to it yourself; and then you'll know. You'll come to it sooner than a teetotaller like me, fillin yourself with gin at this hour o the mornin!

Bill. I'm no gin drinker, you old liar; but when I want to give my girl a bloomin good idin I like to av a bit o devil in me: see? An here I am, talkin to a rotten old blighter like you sted o givin her wot for[17]. [Working himself into a rage] I'm goin in there to fetch her out. [He makes vengefully for the shelter door].

Shirley. You're goin to the station on a stretcher, more likely; and they'll take the gin and the devil out of you there when they get you inside. You mind what you're about: the major here is the Earl o Stevenage's granddaughter.

Bill [checked] Garn!

Shirley. You'll see.

Bill [his resolution oozing] Well, I ain't done nothin to er.

Shirley. Spose she said you did! who'd believe you?

Bill [very uneasy, skulking back to the corner of the penthouse] Gawd! There's no jastice in this country. To think wot them people can do! I'm as good as er.

Shirley. Tell her so. It's just what a fool like you would do.

Barbara, brisk and businesslike, comes from the shelter with a note book, and addresses herself to Shirley. Bill, cowed, sits down in the corner on a form, and turns his back on them.

Barbara. Good morning.

Shirley [standing up and taking off his hat] Good morning, miss.

16. A road in Hackney, northeast London.
17. A beating.

Barbara. Sit down: make yourself at home. [He hesitates; but she puts a friendly hand on his shoulder and makes him obey]. Now then! since you've made friends with us, we want to know all about you. Names and addresses and trades.

Shirley. Peter Shirley. Fitter. Chucked out two months ago because I was too old.

Barbara [not at all surprised] You'd pass still. Why didn't you dye your hair?

Shirley. I did. Me age come out at a coroner's inquest on me daughter.

Barbara. Steady?

Shirley. Teetotaller. Never out of a job before. Good worker. And sent to the knackers[18] like an old horse!

Barbara. No matter: if you did your part God will do his.

Shirley [suddenly stubborn] My religion's no concern of anybody but myself.

Barbara [guessing] I know. Secularist[19]?

Shirley [hotly] Did I offer to deny it?

Barbara. Why should you? My own father's a Secularist, I think. Our Father — yours and mine — fulfils himself in many ways; and I daresay he knew what he was about when he made a Secularist of you. So buck up, Peter! we can always find a job for a steady man like you. [Shirley, disarmed, touches his hat. She turns from him to Bill]. What's your name?

Bill [insolently] Wot's that to you?

Barbara [calmly making a note] Afraid to give his name. Any trade?

Bill. Who's afraid to give his name? [Doggedly, with a sense of heroically defying the House of Lords in the person of Lord Stevenage] If you want to bring a charge agen me, bring it. [She waits, unruffled]. My name's Bill Walker.

Barbara [as if the name were familiar: trying to remember how] Bill Walker? [Recollecting] Oh, I know: you're the man that Jenny Hill was praying for inside just now. [She enters his name in her note book].

Bill. Who's Jenny Hill? And what call has she to pray for me?

Barbara. I don't know. Perhaps it was you that cut her lip.

Bill [defiantly] Yes, it was me that cut her lip. I ain't afraid o you.

Barbara. How could you be, since you're not afraid of God? You're a brave man, Mr. Walker. It takes some pluck to do our work here; but none of us dare lift our hand against a girl like that, for fear of her father in heaven.

Bill [sullenly] I want none o your cantin jaw. I suppose you think I come here to beg from you, like this damaged lot here. Not me. I don't want your bread and scrape and catlap[20]. I don't believe in your Gawd, no more than you do yourself.

Barbara [sunnily apologetic and ladylike, as on a new footing with him] Oh, I beg your pardon for putting your name down, Mr. Walker. I didn't understand. I'll strike it out.

Bill [taking this as a slight, and deeply wounded by it] Eah! you let my name alone. Ain't it good enough to be in your book?

Barbara [considering] Well, you see, there's no use putting down your name unless I can do something for you, is there? What's your trade?

Bill [still smarting] That's no concern o yours.

Barbara. Just so. [very businesslike] I'll put you down as [writing] the man who — struck — poor little Jenny Hill — in the mouth.

Bill [rising threateningly] See here. I've ad enough o this.

18. A knacker's yard is a slaughterhouse for horses.

19. An ethical system founded on natural morality and opposed to the tenets of revealed religion.

20. Milk.

Barbara [quite sunny and fearless] What did you come to us for?

Bill. I come for my girl, see? I come to take her out o this and to break er jaws for her.

Barbara [complacently] You see I was right about your trade. [Bill, on the point of retorting furiously, finds himself, to his great shame and terror, in danger of crying instead. He sits down again suddenly]. What's her name?

Bill [dogged] Er name's Mog Abbijam: thats wot her name is.

Barbara. Oh, she's gone to Canning Town, to our barracks there.

Bill [fortified by his resentment of Mog's perfidy] is she? [Vindictively] Then I'm goin to Kennintahn arter her. [He crosses to the gate; hesitates; finally comes back at Barbara]. Are you lyin to me to get shut o me?

Barbara. I don't want to get shut of you. I want to keep you here and save your soul. You'd better stay: you're going to have a bad time today, Bill.

Bill. Who's goin to give it to me? You, praps.

Barbara. Someone you don't believe in. But you'll be glad afterwards.

Bill [slinking off] I'll go to Kennintahn to be out o the reach o your tongue. [Suddenly turning on her with intense malice] And if I don't find Mog there, I'll come back and do two years for you, selp me Gawd if I don't!

Barbara [a shade kindlier, if possible] It's no use, Bill. She's got another bloke.

Bill. Wot!

Barbara. One of her own converts. He fell in love with her when he saw her with her soul saved, and her face clean, and her hair washed.

Bill [surprised] Wottud she wash it for, the carroty slut? It's red.

Barbara. It's quite lovely now, because she wears a new look in her eyes with it. It's a pity you're too late. The new bloke has put your nose out of joint, Bill.

Bill. I'll put his nose out o joint for him. Not that I care a curse for her, mind that. But I'll teach her to drop me as if I was dirt. And I'll teach him to meddle with my Judy. Wots iz bleedin name?

Barbara. Sergeant Todger Fairmile.

Shirley [rising with grim joy] I'll go with him, miss. I want to see them two meet. I'll take him to the infirmary when it's over.

Bill [to Shirley, with undissembled misgiving] Is that im you was speakin on?

Shirley. That's him.

Bill. Im that wrastled in the music all?

Shirley. The competitions at the National Sportin Club was worth nigh a hundred a year to him. He's gev em up now for religion; so he's a bit fresh for want of the exercise he was accustomed to. He'll be glad to see you. Come along.

Bill. Wots is weight?

Shirley. Thirteen four[21]. [Bill's last hope expires].

Barbara. Go and talk to him, Bill. He'll convert you.

Shirley. He'll convert your head into a mashed potato.

Bill [sullenly] I ain't afraid of him. I ain't afraid of ennybody. But he can lick me. She's done me. [He sits down moodily on the edge of the horse trough].

Shirley. You ain't goin. I thought not. [He resumes his seat].

Barbara [calling] Jenny!

Jenny [appearing at the shelter door with a plaster on the corner of her mouth] Yes, Major.

Barbara. Send Rummy Mitchens out to clear away here.

21. 13 stone = 13 x 14 pounds plus 4, or 186 pounds. One stone is equal to 14 pounds.

Jenny. I think she's afraid.

Barbara [her resemblance to her mother flashing out for a moment] Nonsense! she must do as she's told.

Jenny [calling into the shelter] Rummy: the Major says you must come.

Jenny comes to Barbara, purposely keeping on the side next Bill, lest he should suppose that she shrank from him or bore malice.

Barbara. Poor little Jenny! Are you tired? [Looking at the wounded cheek] Does it hurt?

Jenny. No: it's all right now. It was nothing.

Barbara [critically] It was as hard as he could hit, I expect. Poor Bill! You don't feel angry with him, do you?

Jenny. Oh no, no, no: indeed I don't, Major, bless his poor heart! [Barbara kisses her; and she runs away merrily into the shelter. Bill writhes with an agonizing return of his new and alarming symptoms, but says nothing. Rummy Mitchens comes from the shelter].

Barbara [going to meet Rummy] Now Rummy, bustle. Take in those mugs and plates to be washed; and throw the crumbs about for the birds.

Rummy takes the three plates and mugs; but Shirley takes back his mug from her, as there it still some milk left in it.

Rummy. There ain't any crumbs. This ain't a time to waste good bread on birds.

Price [appearing at the shelter door] Gentleman come to see the shelter, Major. Says he's your father.

Barbara. All right. Coming. [Snobby goes back into the shelter, followed by Barbara].

Rummy [stealing across to Bill and addressing him in a subdued voice, but with intense conviction] I'd av the lor[22] of you, you flat eared pignosed potwalloper, if she'd let me. You're no gentleman, to hit a lady in the face. [Bill, with greater things moving in him, takes no notice].

Shirley [following her] Here! in with you and don't get yourself into more trouble by talking.

Rummy [with hauteur] I ain't ad the pleasure o being hintroduced to you, as I can remember. [She goes into the shelter with the plates].

Bill [savagely] Don't you talk to me, d'ye hear. You lea me alone, or I'll do you a mischief. I'm not dirt under your feet, anyway.

Shirley [calmly] Don't you be afeerd. You ain't such prime company that you need expect to be sought after. [He is about to go into the shelter when Barbara comes out, with Undershaft on her right].

Barbara. Oh there you are, Mr Shirley! [Between them] This is my father: I told you he was a Secularist, didn't I? Perhaps you'll be able to comfort one another.

Undershaft [startled] A Secularist! Not the least in the world: on the contrary, a confirmed mystic.

Barbara. Sorry, I'm sure. By the way, papa, what is your religion — in case I have to introduce you again?

Undershaft. My religion? Well, my dear, I am a Millionaire. That is my religion.

Barbara. Then I'm afraid you and Mr Shirley wont be able to comfort one another after all. You're not a Millionaire, are you, Peter?

Shirley. No; and proud of it.

Undershaft [gravely] Poverty, my friend, is not a thing to be proud of.

Shirley [angrily] Who made your millions for you? Me and my like. What's kep us poor? Keepin you rich. I wouldn't have your conscience, not for all your income.

Undershaft. I wouldn't have your income, not for all your conscience, Mr Shirley. [He goes to the penthouse and sits down on a form].

22. The law.

Barbara [stopping Shirley adroitly as he is about to retort] You wouldn't think he was my father, would you, Peter? Will you go into the shelter and lend the lasses a hand for a while: we're worked off our feet.

Shirley [bitterly] Yes: I'm in their debt for a meal, ain't I?

Barbara. Oh, not because you're in their debt; but for love of them, Peter, for love of them. [He cannot understand, and is rather scandalized]. There! Don't stare at me. In with you; and give that conscience of yours a holiday [bustling him into the shelter].

Shirley [as he goes in] Ah! it's a pity you never was trained to use your reason, miss. You'd have been a very taking[23] lecturer on Secularism.

Barbara turns to her father.

Undershaft. Never mind me, my dear. Go about your work; and let me watch it for a while.

Barbara. All right.

Undershaft. For instance, what's the matter with that out-patient over there?

Barbara [looking at Bill, whose attitude has never changed, and whose expression of brooding wrath has deepened] Oh, we shall cure him in no time. Just watch. [She goes over to Bill and waits. He glances up at her and casts his eyes down again, uneasy, but grimmer than ever]. It would be nice to just stamp on Mog Habbijam's face, wouldn't it, Bill?

Bill [starting up from the trough in consternation] It's a lie: I never said so. [She shakes her head]. Who told you wot was in my mind?

Barbara. Only your new friend.

Bill. Wot new friend?

Barbara. The devil, Bill. When he gets round people they get miserable, just like you.

Bill [with a heartbreaking attempt at devil-may-care cheerfulness] I ain't miserable. [He sits down again, and stretches his legs in an attempt to seem indifferent].

Barbara. Well, if you're happy, why don't you look happy, as we do?

Bill [his legs curling back in spite of him] I'm appy enough, I tell you. Why don't you lea me alown? Wot av I done to you? I ain't smashed your face, av I?

Barbara [softly: wooing his soul] It's not me that's getting at you, Bill.

Bill. Who else is it?

Barbara. Somebody that doesn't intend you to smash women's faces, I suppose. Somebody or something that wants to make a man of you.

Bill [blustering] Make a man o ME! Ain't I a man? eh? ain't I a man? Who sez I'm not a man?

Barbara. There's a man in you somewhere, I suppose. But why did he let you hit poor little Jenny Hill? That wasn't very manly of him, was it?

Bill [tormented] Av done with it, I tell you. Chock[24] it. I'm sick of your Jenny Ill and er silly little face.

Barbara. Then why do you keep thinking about it? Why does it keep coming up against you in your mind? You're not getting converted, are you?

Bill [with conviction] Not ME. Not likely. Not arf.

Barbara. That's right, Bill. Hold out against it. Put out your strength. Don't let's get you cheap. Todger Fairmile said he wrestled for three nights against his Salvation harder than he ever wrestled with the Jap at the music hall. He gave in to the Jap when his arm was going to break. But he didn't give in to his salvation until his heart was going to break. Perhaps you'll escape that. You haven't any heart, have you?

Bill. Wot dye mean? Wy ain't I got a art the same as ennybody else?

Barbara. A man with a heart wouldn't have bashed poor little Jenny's face, would he?

23. Convincing.
24. Chuck, stop.

Bill [almost crying] Ow, will you lea me alown? Av I ever offered to meddle with you, that you come noggin and provowkin me lawk this? [He writhes convulsively from his eyes to his toes].

Barbara [with a steady soothing hand on his arm and a gentle voice that never lets him go] It's your soul that's hurting you, Bill, and not me. We've been through it all ourselves. Come with us, Bill. [He looks wildly round]. To brave manhood on earth and eternal glory in heaven. [He is on the point of breaking down]. Come. [A drum is heard in the shelter; and Bill, with a gasp, escapes from the spell as Barbara turns quickly. Adolphus enters from the shelter with a big drum]. Oh! there you are, Dolly. Let me introduce a new friend of mine, Mr Bill Walker. This is my bloke, Bill: Mr Cusins. [Cusins salutes with his drumstick].

Bill. Goin to marry im?

Barbara. Yes.

Bill [fervently] Gawd elp im! Gawd elp im!

Barbara. Why? Do you think he won't be happy with me?

Bill. I've only ad to stand it for a mornin: e'll av to stand it for a lifetime.

Cusins. That is a frightful reflection, Mr Walker. But I can't tear myself away from her.

Bill. Well, I can. [To Barbara] Eah! do you know where I'm goin to, and wot I'm goin to do?

Barbara. Yes: you're going to heaven; and you're coming back here before the week's out to tell me so.

Bill. You lie. I'm goin to Kennintahn, to spit in Todger Fairmile's eye. I bashed Jenny Ill's face; and now I'll get me own face bashed and come back and show it to er. E'll it me ardern I it er. That'll make us square. [To Adolphus] Is that fair or is it not? You're a genlmn: you oughter know.

Barbara. Two black eyes wont make one white one, Bill.

Bill. I didn't ast you. Cawn't you never keep your mahth shut? I ast the genlmn.

Cusins [reflectively] Yes: I think you're right, Mr Walker. Yes: I should do it. It's curious: it's exactly what an ancient Greek would have done.

Barbara. But what good will it do?

Cusins. Well, it will give Mr Fairmile some exercise; and it will satisfy Mr Walker's soul.

Bill. Rot! there ain't no sach a thing as a soul. Ah kin you tell wether I've a soul or not? You never seen it.

Barbara. I've seen it hurting you when you went against it.

Bill [with compressed aggravation] If you was my girl and took the word out o me mahth lawk thet, I'd give you suthink you'd feel urtin, so I would. [To Adolphus] You take my tip, mate. Stop er jawr; or you'll die afore your time. [With intense expression] Wore aht: thets wot you'll be: wore aht. [He goes away through the gate].

Cusins [looking after him] I wonder!

Barbara. Dolly! [indignant, in her mother's manner].

Cusins. Yes, my dear, it's very wearing to be in love with you. If it lasts, I quite think I shall die young.

Barbara. Should you mind?

Cusins. Not at all. [He is suddenly softened, and kisses her over the drum, evidently not for the first time, as people cannot kiss over a big drum without practice. Undershaft coughs].

Barbara. It's all right, papa, we've not forgotten you. Dolly: explain the place to papa: I haven't time. [She goes busily into the shelter].

Undershaft and Adolphus now have the yard to themselves. Undershaft, seated on a form, and still keenly attentive, looks hard at Adolphus. Adolphus looks hard at him.

Undershaft. I fancy you guess something of what is in my mind, Mr Cusins. [Cusins flourishes his drumsticks as if in the art of beating a lively rataplan, but makes no sound]. Exactly so. But suppose Barbara finds you out!

Cusins. You know, I do not admit that I am imposing on Barbara. I am quite genuinely interested in the views of the Salvation Army. The fact is, I am a sort of collector of religions; and the curious thing is that I find I can believe them all. By the way, have you any religion?

Undershaft. Yes.

Cusins. Anything out of the common?

Undershaft. Only that there are two things necessary to Salvation.

Cusins [disappointed, but polite] Ah, the Church Catechism. Charles Lomax also belongs to the Established Church.

Undershaft. The two things are —

Cusins. Baptism and —

Undershaft. No. Money and gunpowder.

Cusins [surprised, but interested] That is the general opinion of our governing classes. The novelty is in hearing any man confess it.

Undershaft. Just so.

Cusins. Excuse me: is there any place in your religion for honor, justice, truth, love, mercy and so forth?

Undershaft. Yes: they are the graces and luxuries of a rich, strong, and safe life.

Cusins. Suppose one is forced to choose between them and money or gunpowder?

Undershaft. Choose money and gunpowder; for without enough of both you cannot afford the others.

Cusins. That is your religion?

Undershaft. Yes.

The cadence of this reply makes a full close in the conversation. Cusins twists his face dubiously and contemplates Undershaft. Undershaft contemplates him.

Cusins. Barbara won't stand that. You will have to choose between your religion and Barbara.

Undershaft. So will you, my friend. She will find out that that drum of yours is hollow.

Cusins. Father Undershaft: you are mistaken: I am a sincere Salvationist. You do not understand the Salvation Army. It is the army of joy, of love, of courage: it has banished the fear and remorse and despair of the old hellridden evangelical sects: it marches to fight the devil with trumpet and drum, with music and dancing, with banner and palm, as becomes a sally from heaven by its happy garrison. It picks the waster out of the public house and makes a man of him: it finds a worm wriggling in a back kitchen, and lo! a woman! Men and women of rank too, sons and daughters of the Highest. It takes the poor professor of Greek, the most artificial and self-suppressed of human creatures, from his meal of roots, and lets loose the rhapsodist in him; reveals the true worship of Dionysos[25] to him; sends him down the public street drumming dithyrambs[26] [he plays a thundering flourish on the drum].

Undershaft. You will alarm the shelter.

Cusins. Oh, they are accustomed to these sudden ecstasies of piety. However, if the drum worries you — [he pockets the drumsticks; unhooks the drum; and stands it on the ground opposite the gateway].

Undershaft. Thank you.

Cusins. You remember what Euripides says about your money and gunpowder?

Undershaft. No.

Cusins [declaiming]

One and another
In money and guns may outpass his brother;
And men in their millions float and flow

25. Greek god of wine, religious ecstasy, and theater.

26. Wild, impetuous lyric in praise of Dionysos (Bacchus).

And seethe with a million hopes as leaven;
And they win their will; or they miss their will;
And their hopes are dead or are pined for still:
But whoe'er can know
As the long days go
That to live is happy, has found *his* heaven.
My translation[27]: what do you think of it?

Undershaft. I think, my friend, that if you wish to know, as the long days go, that to live is happy, you must first acquire money enough for a decent life, and power enough to be your own master.

Cusins. You are damnably discouraging. [He resumes his declamation].

Is it so hard a thing to see
That the spirit of God — whate'er it be —
The Law that abides and changes not, ages long,
The Eternal and Nature-born: these things be strong.
What else is Wisdom? What of Man's endeavor,
Or God's high grace so lovely and so great?
To stand from fear set free? to breathe and wait?
To hold a hand uplifted over Fate?
And shall not Barbara be loved for ever?

Undershaft. Euripides mentions Barbara, does he?

Cusins. It is a fair translation. The word means Loveliness.

Undershaft. May I ask — as Barbara's father — how much a year she is to be loved for ever on?

Cusins. As Barbara's father, that is more your affair than mine. I can feed her by teaching Greek: that is about all.

Undershaft. Do you consider it a good match for her?

Cusins [with polite obstinacy] Mr Undershaft: I am in many ways a weak, timid, ineffectual person; and my health is far from satisfactory. But whenever I feel that I must have anything, I get it, sooner or later. I feel that way about Barbara. I don't like marriage: I feel intensely afraid of it; and I don't know what I shall do with Barbara or what she will do with me. But I feel that I and nobody else must marry her. Please regard that as settled.— Not that I wish to be arbitrary; but why should I waste your time in discussing what is inevitable?

Undershaft. You mean that you will stick at nothing not even the conversion of the Salvation Army to the worship of Dionysos.

Cusins. The business of the Salvation Army is to save, not to wrangle about the name of the pathfinder. Dionysos or another: what does it matter?

Undershaft [rising and approaching him] Professor Cusins you are a young man after my own heart.

Cusins. Mr Undershaft: you are, as far as I am able to gather, a most infernal old rascal; but you appeal very strongly to my sense of ironic humor.

Undershaft mutely offers his hand. They shake.

Undershaft [suddenly concentrating himself] And now to business.

Cusins. Pardon me. We were discussing religion. Why go back to such an uninteresting and unimportant subject as business?

Undershaft. Religion is our business at present, because it is through religion alone that we can win Barbara.

27. From Euripides' play *The Bacchae* (405 BC). Shaw uses here the 1904 translation of his friend, the Australian-born classicist Gilbert Murray (1866-1957), upon whom he based the character Adolphus Cusins.

Cusins. Have you, too, fallen in love with Barbara?

Undershaft. Yes, with a father's love.

Cusins. A father's love for a grown-up daughter is the most dangerous of all infatuations. I apologize for mentioning my own pale, coy, mistrustful fancy in the same breath with it.

Undershaft. Keep to the point. We have to win her; and we are neither of us Methodists[28].

Cusins. That doesn't matter. The power Barbara wields here — the power that wields Barbara herself — is not Calvinism, not Presbyterianism, not Methodism —

Undershaft. Not Greek Paganism either, eh?

Cusins. I admit that. Barbara is quite original in her religion.

Undershaft [triumphantly] Aha! Barbara Undershaft would be. Her inspiration comes from within herself.

Cusins. How do you suppose it got there?

Undershaft [in towering excitement] It is the Undershaft inheritance. I shall hand on my torch to my daughter. She shall make my converts and preach my gospel.

Cusins. What! Money and gunpowder!

Undershaft. Yes, money and gunpowder; freedom and power; command of life and command of death.

Cusins [urbanely: trying to bring him down to earth] This is extremely interesting, Mr Undershaft. Of course you know that you are mad.

Undershaft [with redoubled force] And you?

Cusins. Oh, mad as a hatter. You are welcome to my secret since I have discovered yours. But I am astonished. Can a madman make cannons?

Undershaft. Would anyone else than a madman make them? And now [with surging energy] question for question. Can a sane man translate Euripides?

Cusins. No.

Undershaft [reining him by the shoulder] Can a sane woman make a man of a waster or a woman of a worm?

Cusins [reeling before the storm] Father Colossus — Mammoth Millionaire —

Undershaft [pressing him] Are there two mad people or three in this Salvation shelter to-day?

Cusins. You mean Barbara is as mad as we are!

Undershaft [pushing him lightly off and resuming his equanimity suddenly and completely] Pooh, Professor! let us call things by their proper names. I am a millionaire; you are a poet; Barbara is a savior of souls. What have we three to do with the common mob of slaves and idolaters? [He sits down again with a shrug of contempt for the mob].

Cusins. Take care! Barbara is in love with the common people. So am I. Have you never felt the romance of that love?

Undershaft [cold and sardonic] Have you ever been in love with Poverty, like St Francis? Have you ever been in love with Dirt, like St Simeon? Have you ever been in love with disease and suffering, like our nurses and philanthropists? Such passions are not virtues, but the most unnatural of all the vices. This love of the common people may please an earl's granddaughter and a university professor; but I have been a common man and a poor man; and it has no romance for me. Leave it to the poor to pretend that poverty is a blessing: leave it to the coward to make a religion of his cowardice by preaching humility: we know better than that. We three must stand together above the common people: how else can we help their children to climb up beside us? Barbara must belong to us, not to the Salvation Army.

28. Gen. William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, was originally a Methodist. Methodism was a reformist sect founded by John Wesley (1703-1791) from within the Church of England.

Cusins. Well, I can only say that if you think you will get her away from the Salvation Army by talking to her as you have been talking to me, you don't know Barbara.

Undershaft. My friend: I never ask for what I can buy.

Cusins [in a white fury] Do I understand you to imply that you can buy Barbara?

Undershaft. No; but I can buy the Salvation Army.

Cusins. Quite impossible.

Undershaft. You shall see. All religious organizations exist by selling themselves to the rich.

Cusins. Not the Army. That is the Church of the poor.

Undershaft. All the more reason for buying it.

Cusins. I don't think you quite know what the Army does for the poor.

Undershaft. Oh yes I do. It draws their teeth: that is enough for me — as a man of business —

Cusins. Nonsense! It makes them sober —

Undershaft. I prefer sober workmen. The profits are larger.

Cusins. — honest —

Undershaft. Honest workmen are the most economical.

Cusins. — attached to their homes —

Undershaft. So much the better: they will put up with anything sooner than change their shop.

Cusins. — happy —

Undershaft. An invaluable safeguard against revolution.

Cusins. — unselfish —

Undershaft. Indifferent to their own interests, which suits me exactly.

Cusins. — with their thoughts on heavenly things —

Undershaft [rising] And not on Trade Unionism nor Socialism. Excellent.

Cusins [revolted] You really are an infernal old rascal.

Undershaft [indicating Peter Shirley, who has just came from the shelter and strolled dejectedly down the yard between them] And this is an honest man!

Shirley. Yes; and what av I got by it? [he passes on bitterly and sits on the form, in the corner of the penthouse].

Snobby Price, beaming sanctimoniously, and Jenny Hill, with a tambourine full of coppers, come from the shelter and go to the drum, on which Jenny begins to count the money.

Undershaft [replying to Shirley] Oh, your employers must have got a good deal by it from first to last. [He sits on the table, with one foot on the side form. Cusins, overwhelmed, sits down on the same form nearer the shelter. Barbara comes from the shelter to the middle of the yard. She is excited and a little overwrought].

Barbara. We've just had a splendid experience meeting at the other gate in Cripps's lane. I've hardly ever seen them so much moved as they were by your confession, Mr Price.

Price. I could almost be glad of my past wickedness if I could believe that it would elp to keep hathers stright.

Barbara. So it will, Snobby. How much, Jenny?

Jenny. Four and tenpence, Major.

Barbara. Oh Snobby, if you had given your poor mother just one more kick, we should have got the whole five shillings!

Price. If she heard you say that, miss, she'd be sorry I didn't. But I'm glad. Oh what a joy it will be to her when she hears I'm saved!

Undershaft. Shall I contribute the odd twopence, Barbara? The millionaire's mite, eh? [He takes a couple of pennies from his pocket.]

Barbara. How did you make that twopence?

Undershaft. As usual. By selling cannons, torpedoes, submarines, and my new patent Grand Duke hand grenade.

Barbara. Put it back in your pocket. You can't buy your Salvation here for twopence: you must work it out.

Undershaft. Is twopence not enough? I can afford a little more, if you press me.

Barbara. Two million millions would not be enough. There is bad blood on your hands; and nothing but good blood can cleanse them. Money is no use. Take it away. [She turns to Cusins]. Dolly: you must write another letter for me to the papers. [He makes a wry face]. Yes: I know you don't like it; but it must be done. The starvation this winter is beating us: everybody is unemployed. The General says we must close this shelter if we cant get more money. I force the collections at the meetings until I am ashamed, don't I, Snobby?

Price. It's a fair treat to see you work it, miss. The way you got them up from three-and-six to four-and-ten with that hymn, penny by penny and verse by verse, was a caution. Not a Cheap Jack on Mile End Waste[29] could touch you at it.

Barbara. Yes; but I wish we could do without it. I am getting at last to think more of the collection than of the people's souls. And what are those hatfuls of pence and halfpence? We want thousands! tens of thousands! hundreds of thousands! I want to convert people, not to be always begging for the Army in a way I'd die sooner than beg for myself.

Undershaft [in profound irony] Genuine unselfishness is capable of anything, my dear.

Barbara [unsuspectingly, as she turns away to take the money from the drum and put it in a cash bag she carries] Yes, isn't it? [Undershaft looks sardonically at Cusins].

Cusins [aside to Undershaft] Mephistopheles[30]! Machiavelli!

Barbara [tears coming into her eyes as she ties the bag and pockets it] How are we to feed them? I can't talk religion to a man with bodily hunger in his eyes. [Almost breaking down] It's frightful.

Jenny [running to her] Major, dear —

Barbara [rebounding] No: don't comfort me. It will be all right. We shall get the money.

Undershaft. How?

Jenny. By praying for it, of course. Mrs Baines says she prayed for it last night; and she has never prayed for it in vain: never once. [She goes to the gate and looks out into the street].

Barbara [who has dried her eyes and regained her composure] By the way, dad, Mrs Baines has come to march with us to our big meeting this afternoon; and she is very anxious to meet you, for some reason or other. Perhaps she'll convert you.

Undershaft. I shall be delighted, my dear.

Jenny [at the gate: excitedly] Major! Major! Here's that man back again.

Barbara. What man?

Jenny. The man that hit me. Oh, I hope he's coming back to join us.

Bill Walker, with frost on his jacket, comes through the gate, his hands deep in his pockets and his chin sunk between his shoulders, like a cleaned-out gambler. He halts between Barbara and the drum.

Barbara. Hullo, Bill! Back already!

Bill [nagging at her] Bin talkin ever sense, av you?

Barbara. Pretty nearly. Well, has Todger paid you out for poor Jenny's jaw?

Bill. NO he ain't.

29. A cheap-Jack is a travelling vendor of small wares, willing to take less than the price he first names. Mile End Waste is the market area of Mile End Road, London, the East End equivalent of Hyde Park Corner and place where William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, gave his first open-air sermon.

30. The devil who bought Faust's soul. Machiavelli (1469-1527), Italian statesman and author whose name came to suggest politicians who use deceit to accomplish their ends.

Barbara. I thought your jacket looked a bit snowy.

Bill. So it is snowy. You want to know where the snow come from, don’t you?

Barbara. Yes.

Bill. Well, it come from off the ground in Parkinses Corner in Kennintahn. It got rubbed off be my shoulders see?

Barbara. Pity you didn’t rub some off with your knees, Bill! That would have done you a lot of good.

Bill [with your mirthless humor] I was saving another man’s knees at the time. E was kneelin on my ed, so e was.

Jenny. Who was kneeling on your head?

Bill. Todger was. E was prayin for me: prayin comfortable with me as a carpet. So was Mog. So was the ole bloomin meetin. Mog she sez “O Lord break is stubborn spirit; but don’t urt is dear art.” That was wot she said. “Don’t urt is dear art”! An er bloke — thirteen stun four!— kneelin wiv all is weight on me. Funny, ain’t it?

Jenny. Oh no. We’re so sorry, Mr Walker.

Barbara [enjoying it frankly] Nonsense! of course it’s funny. Served you right, Bill! You must have done something to him first.

Bill [doggedly] I did wot I said I’d do. I spit in is eye. E looks up at the sky and sez, “O that I should be fahnd worthy to be spit upon for the gospel’s sake!” a sez; an Mog sez “Glory Allelloolier!”; an then a called me Brother, an dahned me as if I was a kid and a was me mother washin me a Setterda nawt. I adn’t just no show wiv im at all. Arf the street prayed; an the tother arf larfed fit to split theirselves. [To Barbara] There! are you settisfawd nah?

Barbara [her eyes dancing] Wish I’d been there, Bill.

Bill. Yes: you’d a got in a hextra bit o talk on me, wouldn’t you?

Jenny. I’m so sorry, Mr. Walker.

Bill [fiercely] Don’t you go bein sorry for me: you’ve no call. Listen ere. I broke your jawr.

Jenny. No, it didn’t hurt me: indeed it didn’t, except for a moment. It was only that I was frightened.

Bill. I don’t want to be forgive be you, or be ennybody. Wot I did I’ll pay for. I tried to get me own jawr broke to settisfaw you —

Jenny [distressed] Oh no —

Bill [impatiently] Tell y’I did: cawn’t you listen to wot’s bein told you? All I got be it was bein made a sight of in the public street for me pains. Well, if I cawn’t settisfaw you one way, I can another. Listen ere! I ad two quid saved agen the frost; an I’ve a pahnd of it left. A mate n mine last week ad words with the Judy e’s goin to marry. E give er wot-for; an e’s bin fined fifteen bob. E ad a right to it er because they was goin to be marrid; but I adn’t no right to it you; so put anather fawv bob on an call it a pahnd’s worth. [He produces a sovereign]. Ere’s the money. Take it; and let’s av no more o your forgivin an prayin and your Major jawrin me. Let wot I done be done and paid for; and let there be a end of it.

Jenny. Oh, I couldn’t take it, Mr. Walker. But if you would give a shilling or two to poor Rummy Mitchens! you really did hurt her; and she’s old.

Bill [contemptuously] Not likely. I’d give her anather as soon as look at er. Let her av the lawr o me as she threatened! She ain’t forgiven me: not mach. Wot I done to er is not on me mawnd — wot she [indicating Barbara] might call on me conscience — no more than stickin a pig. It’s this Christian game o yours that I won’t av played agen me: this bloomin forgivin an noggin an jawrin that makes a man that sore that iz lawf’s a burdn to im. I won’t av it, I tell you; so take your money and stop throwin your silly bashed face hup agen me.

Jenny. Major: may I take a little of it for the Army?

Barbara. No: the Army is not to be bought. We want your soul, Bill; and we’ll take nothing less.

Bill [bitterly] I know. It ain't enough. Me an me few shillins is not good enough for you. You're a earl's grendorter, you are. Nothin less than a underd pahnd for you.

Undershaft. Come, Barbara! you could do a great deal of good with a hundred pounds. If you will set this gentleman's mind at ease by taking his pound, I will give the other ninety-nine [Bill, astounded by such opulence, instinctively touches his cap].

Barbara. Oh, you're too extravagant, papa. Bill offers twenty pieces of silver[31]. All you need offer is the other ten. That will make the standard price to buy anybody who's for sale. I'm not; and the Army's not. [To Bill] You'll never have another quiet moment, Bill, until you come round to us. You can't stand out against your salvation.

Bill [sullenly] I cawn't stend aht agen music all wrastlers and artful tongued women. I've offered to pay. I can do no more. Take it or leave it. There it is. [He throws the sovereign on the drum, and sits down on the horse-trough. The coin fascinates Snobby Price, who takes an early opportunity of dropping his cap on it].

Mrs Baines comes from the shelter. She is dressed as a Salvation Army Commissioner. She is an earnest looking woman of about 40, with a caressing, urgent voice, and an appealing manner.

Barbara. This is my father, Mrs Baines. [Undershaft comes from the table, taking his hat off with marked civility]. Try what you can do with him. He won't listen to me, because he remembers what a fool I was when I was a baby.

[She leaves them together and chats with Jenny].

Mrs Baines. Have you been shown over the shelter, Mr Undershaft? You know the work we're doing, of course.

Undershaft [very civilly] The whole nation knows it, Mrs Baines.

Mrs Baines. No, Sir: the whole nation does not know it, or we should not be crippled as we are for want of money to carry our work through the length and breadth of the land. Let me tell you that there would have been rioting this winter in London but for us.

Undershaft. You really think so?

Mrs Baines. I know it. I remember 1886[32], when you rich gentlemen hardened your hearts against the cry of the poor. They broke the windows of your clubs in Pall Mall.

Undershaft [gleaming with approval of their method] And the Mansion House Fund[33] went up next day from thirty thousand pounds to seventy-nine thousand! I remember quite well.

Mrs Baines. Well, won't you help me to get at the people? They won't break windows then. Come here, Price. Let me show you to this gentleman [Price comes to be inspected]. Do you remember the window breaking?

Price. My ole father thought it was the revolution, ma'am.

Mrs Baines. Would you break windows now?

Price. Oh no ma'm. The windows of eaven av bin opened to me. I know now that the rich man is a sinner like myself.

Rummy [appearing above at the loft door] Snobby Price!

Snobby. Wot is it?

Rummy. Your mother's askin for you at the other gate in Crippses Lane. She's heard about your confession [Price turns pale].

Mrs Baines. Go, Mr. Price; and pray with her.

Jenny. You can go through the shelter, Snobby.

31. Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15).
32. Trafalgar Square Demonstration and Riot, February 8, 1886. After meetings of two leftist organizations broke up in Trafalgar Square, a crowd of 5,000 people rushed into Pall Mall and St. James, smashing windows of the exclusive men's clubs nearby.
33. Poor-relief fund originated by the Lord Mayor of London. Mansion House is the Lord Mayor's official residence.

Price [to Mrs Baines] I couldn’t face her now; ma’am, with all the weight of my sins fresh on me. Tell her she’ll find her son at ome, waitin for her in prayer. [He skulks off through the gate, incidentally stealing the sovereign on his way out by picking up his cap from the drum].

Mrs Baines [with swimming eyes] You see how we take the anger and the bitterness against you out of their hearts, Mr Undershaft.

Undershaft. It is certainly most convenient and gratifying to all large employers of labor, Mrs Baines.

Mrs Baines. Barbara: Jenny: I have good news: most wonderful news. [Jenny runs to her]. My prayers have been answered. I told you they would, Jenny, didn’t I?

Jenny. Yes, yes.

Barbara [moving nearer to the drum] Have we got money enough to keep the shelter open?

Mrs Baines. I hope we shall have enough to keep all the shelters open. Lord Saxmundham[34] has promised us five thousand pounds —

Barbara. Hooray!

Jenny. Glory!

Mrs Baines. — if —

Barbara. “If!” If what?

Mrs Baines. If five other gentlemen will give a thousand each to make it up to ten thousand.

Barbara. Who is Lord Saxmundham? I never heard of him.

Undershaft [who has pricked up his ears at the peer’s name, and is now watching Barbara curiously] A new creation, my dear. You have heard of Sir Horace Bodger?

Barbara. Bodger! Do you mean the distiller? Bodger’s whisky!

Undershaft. That is the man. He is one of the greatest of our public benefactors. He restored the cathedral at Hakington. They made him a baronet for that. He gave half a million to the funds of his party: they made him a baron for that.

Shirley. What will they give him for the five thousand?

Undershaft. There is nothing left to give him. So the five thousand, I should think, is to save his soul.

Mrs Baines. Heaven grant it may! Oh Mr. Undershaft, you have some very rich friends. Can’t you help us towards the other five thousand? We are going to hold a great meeting this afternoon at the Assembly Hall in the Mile End Road. If I could only announce that one gentleman had come forward to support Lord Saxmundham, others would follow. Don’t you know somebody? Couldn’t you? Wouldn’t you? [her eyes fill with tears] oh, think of those poor people, Mr Undershaft: think of how much it means to them, and how little to a great man like you.

Undershaft [sardonically gallant] Mrs Baines: you are irresistible. I can’t disappoint you; and I can’t deny myself the satisfaction of making Bodger pay up. You shall have your five thousand pounds.

Mrs Baines. Thank God!

Undershaft. You don’t thank me?

Mrs Baines. Oh sir, don’t try to be cynical: don’t be ashamed of being a good man. The Lord will bless you abundantly; and our prayers will be like a strong fortification round you all the days of your life. [With a touch of caution] You will let me have the cheque to show at the meeting, won’t you? Jenny: go in and fetch a pen and ink. [Jenny runs to the shelter door].

Undershaft. Do not disturb Miss Hill: I have a fountain pen. [Jenny halts. He sits at the table and writes the cheque. Cusins rises to make more room for him. They all watch him silently].

Bill [cynically, aside to Barbara, his voice and accent horribly debased] Wot prawce Selvytion nah?

Barbara. Stop. [Undershaft stops writing: they all turn to her in surprise]. Mrs Baines: are you really going to take this money?

34. An invented title.

Mrs Baines [astonished] Why not, dear?

Barbara. Why not! Do you know what my father is? Have you forgotten that Lord Saxmundham is Bodger the whisky man? Do you remember how we implored the County Council to stop him from writing Bodger's Whisky in letters of fire against the sky; so that the poor drinkruined creatures on the embankment could not wake up from their snatches of sleep without being reminded of their deadly thirst by that wicked sky sign? Do you know that the worst thing I have had to fight here is not the devil, but Bodger, Bodger, Bodger, with his whisky, his distilleries, and his tied houses[35]? Are you going to make our shelter another tied house for him, and ask me to keep it?

Bill. Rotten drunken whisky it is too.

Mrs Baines. Dear Barbara: Lord Saxmundham has a soul to be saved like any of us. If heaven has found the way to make a good use of his money, are we to set ourselves up against the answer to our prayers?

Barbara. I know he has a soul to be saved. Let him come down here; and I'll do my best to help him to his salvation. But he wants to send his cheque down to buy us, and go on being as wicked as ever.

Undershaft [with a reasonableness which Cusins alone perceives to be ironical] My dear Barbara: alcohol is a very necessary article. It heals the sick —

Barbara. It does nothing of the sort.

Undershaft. Well, it assists the doctor: that is perhaps a less questionable way of putting it. It makes life bearable to millions of people who could not endure their existence if they were quite sober. It enables Parliament to do things at eleven at night that no sane person would do at eleven in the morning. Is it Bodger's fault that this inestimable gift is deplorably abused by less than one per cent of the poor? [He turns again to the table; signs the cheque; and crosses it].

Mrs Baines. Barbara: will there be less drinking or more if all those poor souls we are saving come to-morrow and find the doors of our shelters shut in their faces? Lord Saxmundham gives us the money to stop drinking — to take his own business from him.

Cusins [impishly] Pure self-sacrifice on Bodger's part, clearly! Bless dear Bodger! [Barbara almost breaks down as Adolphus, too, fails her].

Undershaft [tearing out the cheque and pocketing the book as he rises and goes past Cusins to Mrs Baines] I also, Mrs Baines, may claim a little disinterestedness. Think of my business! think of the widows and orphans! the men and lads torn to pieces with shrapnel and poisoned with lyddite[36] [Mrs Baines shrinks; but he goes on remorselessly]! the oceans of blood, not one drop of which is shed in a really just cause! the ravaged crops! the peaceful peasants forced, women and men, to till their fields under the fire of opposing armies on pain of starvation! the bad blood of the fierce little cowards at home who egg on others to fight for the gratification of their national vanity! All this makes money for me: I am never richer, never busier than when the papers are full of it. Well, it is your work to preach peace on earth and goodwill to men. [Mrs Baines's face lights up again]. Every convert you make is a vote against war. [Her lips move in prayer]. Yet I give you this money to help you to hasten my own commercial ruin. [He gives her the cheque].

Cusins [mounting the form in an ecstasy of mischief] The millennium will be inaugurated by the unselfishness of Undershaft and Bodger. Oh be joyful! [He takes the drumsticks from his pockets and flourishes them].

Mrs Baines [taking the cheque] The longer I live the more proof I see that there is an Infinite Goodness that turns everything to the work of salvation sooner or later. Who would have thought that any good

35. A public house tied by agreement to obtain its supplies from a particular firm.

36. An explosive made from picric acid.

could have come out of war and drink? And yet their profits are brought today to the feet of salvation to do its blessed work. [She is affected to tears].

Jenny [running to Mrs Baines and throwing her arms round her] Oh dear! how blessed, how glorious it all is!

Cusins [in a convulsion of irony] Let us seize this unspeakable moment. Let us march to the great meeting at once. Excuse me just an instant. [He rushes into the shelter. Jenny takes her tambourine from the drum head].

Mrs Baines. Mr Undershaft: have you ever seen a thousand people fall on their knees with one impulse and pray? Come with us to the meeting. Barbara shall tell them that the Army is saved, and saved through you.

Cusins [returning impetuously from the shelter with a flag and a trombone, and coming between Mrs Baines and Undershaft] You shall carry the flag down the first street, Mrs Baines [he gives her the flag]. Mr Undershaft is a gifted trombonist: he shall intone an Olympian diapason to the West Ham Salvation March. [Aside to Undershaft, as he forces the trombone on him] Blow, Machiavelli, blow.

Undershaft [aside to him, as he takes the trombone] The trumpet in Zion[37]! [Cusins rushes to the drum, which he takes up and puts on. Undershaft continues, aloud] I will do my best. I could vamp a bass if I knew the tune.

Cusins. It is a wedding chorus from one of Donizetti's operas; but we have converted it. We convert everything to good here, including Bodger. You remember the chorus. "For thee immense rejoicing — immenso giubilo — immenso giubilo." [With drum obbligato] Rum tum ti tum tum, tum tum ti ta —

Barbara. Dolly: you are breaking my heart.

Cusins. What is a broken heart more or less here? Dionysos Undershaft has descended. I am possessed.

Mrs Baines. Come, Barbara: I must have my dear Major to carry the flag with me.

Jenny. Yes, yes, Major darling.

Cusins [snatches the tambourine out of Jenny's hand and mutely offers it to Barbara].

Barbara [coming forward a little as she puts the offer behind her with a shudder, whilst Cusins recklessly tosses the tambourine back to Jenny and goes to the gate] I can't come.

Jenny. Not come!

Mrs Baines [with tears in her eyes] Barbara: do you think I am wrong to take the money?

Barbara [impulsively going to her and kissing her] No, no: God help you, dear, you must: you are saving the Army. Go; and may you have a great meeting!

Jenny. But arn't you coming?

Barbara. No. [She begins taking off the silver brooch from her collar].

Mrs Baines. Barbara: what are you doing?

Jenny. Why are you taking your badge off? You can't be going to leave us, Major.

Barbara [quietly] Father: come here.

Undershaft [coming to her] My dear! [Seeing that she is going to pin the badge on his collar, he retreats to the penthouse in some alarm].

Barbara [following him] Don't be frightened. [She pins the badge on and steps back towards the table, showing him to the others] There! It's not much for 5000 pounds is it?

Mrs Baines. Barbara: if you won't come and pray with us, promise me you will pray for us.

Barbara. I can't pray now. Perhaps I shall never pray again.

Mrs Baines. Barbara!

37. An allusion to Joel 2:1, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD cometh...."

Jenny. Major!

Barbara [almost delirious] I can’t bear any more. Quick march!

Cusins [calling to the procession in the street outside] Off we go. Play up, there! Immenso giubilo[38]. [He gives the time with his drum; and the band strikes up the march, which rapidly becomes more distant as the procession moves briskly away].

Mrs Baines. I must go, dear. You’re overworked: you will be all right tomorrow. We’ll never lose you. Now Jenny: step out with the old flag. Blood and Fire! [She marches out through the gate with her flag].

Jenny. Glory Hallelujah! [flourishing her tambourine and marching].

Undershaft [to Cusins, as he marches out past him easing the slide of his trombone] “My ducats and my daughter”[39]!

Cusins [following him out] Money and gunpowder!

Barbara. Drunkenness and Murder! My God: why hast thou forsaken me[40]?

She sinks on the form with her face buried in her hands. The march passes away into silence. Bill Walker steals across to her.

Bill [taunting] Wot prawce Selvytion nah?

Shirley. Don’t you hit her when she’s down.

Bill. She it me wen aw wiz dahn. Waw shouldn’t I git a bit o me own back?

Barbara [raising her head] I didn’t take your money, Bill. [She crosses the yard to the gate and turns her back on the two men to hide her face from them].

Bill [sneering after her] Naow, it warn’t enough for you. [Turning to the drum, he misses the money]. Ellow! If you ain’t took it summun else az. Were’s it gorn? Blame me if Jenny Ill didn’t take it arter all!

Rummy [screaming at him from the loft] You lie, you dirty blackguard! Snobby Price pinched it off the drum wen e took ap iz cap. I was ap ere all the time an see im do it.

Bill. Wot! Stowl maw money! Waw didn’t you call thief on him, you silly old mucker you?

Rummy. To serve you aht for ittin me acrost the face. It’s cost y’pahnd, that az. [Raising a paean of squalid triumph] I done you. I’m even with you. I’ve ad it aht o y —. [Bill snatches up Shirley’s mug and hurls it at her. She slams the loft door and vanishes. The mug smashes against the door and falls in fragments].

Bill [beginning to chuckle] Tell us, ole man, wot o’clock this morrun was it wen im as they call Snobby Prawce was sived?

Barbara [turning to him more composedly, and with unspoiled sweetness] About half past twelve, Bill. And he pinched your pound at a quarter to two. I know. Well, you can’t afford to lose it. I’ll send it to you.

Bill [his voice and accent suddenly improving] Not if I was to starve for it. I ain’t to be bought.

Shirley. Ain’t you? You’d sell yourself to the devil for a pint o beer; ony there ain’t no devil to make the offer.

Bill [unshamed] So I would, mate, and often av, cheerful. But she cawn’t buy me. [Approaching Barbara] You wanted my soul, did you? Well, you ain’t got it.

Barbara. I nearly got it, Bill. But we’ve sold it back to you for ten thousand pounds.

Shirley. And dear at the money!

Barbara. No, Peter: it was worth more than money.

Bill [salvationproof] It’s no good: you cawn’t get rahnd me nah. I don’t blieve in it; and I’ve seen today that I was right. [Going] So long, old soupkitchener! Ta, ta, Major Earl’s Grendorter! [Turning at the gate] Wot prawce Selvytion nah? Snobby Prawce! Ha! ha!

38. From the wedding chorus in *Lucia di Lammermoor* by Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848).

39. In *The Merchant of Venice*, 2.8.16, Shylock calls for justice after his daughter Jessica has taken his money and eloped with a Christian.

40. The lament of the crucified Jesus (Matthew 27:46).

Barbara [offering her hand] Goodbye, Bill.

Bill [taken aback, half plucks his cap off then shoves it on again defiantly] Git aht. [Barbara drops her hand, discouraged. He has a twinge of remorse]. But thet's aw rawt, you knaow. Nathink pasnl. Naow mellice. So long, Judy. [He goes].

Barbara. No malice. So long, Bill.

Shirley [shaking his head] You make too much of him, miss, in your innocence.

Barbara [going to him] Peter: I'm like you now. Cleaned out, and lost my job.

Shirley. You've youth an hope. That's two better than me. That's hope for you.

Barbara. I'll get you a job, Peter, the youth will have to be enough for me. [She counts her money]. I have just enough left for two teas at Lockharts, a Rowton doss[41] for you, and my tram and bus home. [He frowns and rises with offended pride. She takes his arm]. Don't be proud, Peter: it's sharing between friends. And promise me you'll talk to me and not let me cry. [She draws him towards the gate].

Shirley. Well, I'm not accustomed to talk to the like of you —

Barbara [urgently] Yes, yes: you must talk to me. Tell me about Tom Paine's books and Bradlaugh[42]'s lectures. Come along.

Shirley. Ah, if you would only read Tom Paine[43] in the proper spirit, miss! [They go out through the gate together].

41. Lockharts, a chain of eating-houses in London; Rowton doss, a cheap hostel for working men, founded by Lord Rowton (1838-1903).
42. Charles Bradlaugh (1833-1891), a British atheist and free-thinker.
43. Tom Paine (1737-1809), author of *The Rights of Man* (1791), a defense of the French Revolution, and *The Age of Reason* (1793), which offers rationalist critique of organized religion.

87.

Major Barbara: Act III

George Bernard Shaw

Next day after lunch Lady Britomart is writing in the library in Wilton Crescent. Sarah is reading in the armchair near the window. Barbara, in ordinary dresss, pale and brooding, is on the settee. Charley Lomax enters. Coming forward between the settee and the writing table, he starts on seeing Barbara fashionably attired and in low spirits.

Lomax. You've left off your uniform!

Barbara says nothing; but an expression of pain passes over her face.

Lady Britomart [warning him in low tones to be careful] Charles!

Lomax [much concerned, sitting down sympathetically on the settee beside Barbara] I'm awfully sorry, Barbara. You know I helped you all I could with the concertina and so forth. [Momentously] Still, I have never shut my eyes to the fact that there is a certain amount of tosh about the Salvation Army. Now the claims of the Church of England —

Lady Britomart. That's enough, Charles. Speak of something suited to your mental capacity.

Lomax. But surely the Church of England is suited to all our capacities.

Barbara [pressing his hand] Thank you for your sympathy, Cholly. Now go and spoon[1] with Sarah.

Lomax [rising and going to Sarah] How is my ownest today?

Sarah. I wish you wouldn't tell Cholly to do things, Barbara. He always comes straight and does them. Cholly: we're going to the works at Perivale St. Andrews this afternoon.

Lomax. What works?

Sarah. The cannon works.

Lomax. What! Your governor's shop!

Sarah. Yes.

Lomax. Oh I say!

Cusins enters in poor condition. He also starts visibly when he sees Barbara without her uniform.

Barbara. I expected you this morning, Dolly. Didn't you guess that?

Cusins [sitting down beside her] I'm sorry. I have only just breakfasted.

Sarah. But we've just finished lunch.

Barbara. Have you had one of your bad nights?

Cusins. No: I had rather a good night: in fact, one of the most remarkable nights I have ever passed.

Barbara. The meeting?

Cusins. No: after the meeting.

Lady Britomart. You should have gone to bed after the meeting. What were you doing?

Cusins. Drinking.

Lady Britomart. { Adolphus!

Sarah. { Dolly!

Barbara. { Dolly!

1. To court or pay addresses to (a person), especially in a sentimental manner.

Lomax. { Oh I say!

Lady Britomart. What were you drinking, may I ask?

Cusins. A most devilish kind of Spanish burgundy, warranted free from added alcohol: a Temperance burgundy in fact. Its richness in natural alcohol made any addition superfluous.

Barbara. Are you joking, Dolly?

Cusins [patiently] No. I have been making a night of it with the nominal head of this household: that is all.

Lady Britomart. Andrew made you drunk!

Cusins. No: he only provided the wine. I think it was Dionysos who made me drunk. [To Barbara] I told you I was possessed.

Lady Britomart. You're not sober yet. Go home to bed at once.

Cusins. I have never before ventured to reproach you, Lady Brit; but how could you marry the Prince of Darkness?

Lady Britomart. It was much more excusable to marry him than to get drunk with him. That is a new accomplishment of Andrew's, by the way. He usen't to drink.

Cusins. He doesn't now. He only sat there and completed the wreck of my moral basis, the rout of my convictions, the purchase of my soul. He cares for you, Barbara. That is what makes him so dangerous to me.

Barbara. That has nothing to do with it, Dolly. There are larger loves and diviner dreams than the fireside ones. You know that, don't you?

Cusins. Yes: that is our understanding. I know it. I hold to it. Unless he can win me on that holier ground he may amuse me for a while; but he can get no deeper hold, strong as he is.

Barbara. Keep to that; and the end will be right. Now tell me what happened at the meeting?

Cusins. It was an amazing meeting. Mrs Baines almost died of emotion. Jenny Hill went stark mad with hysteria. The Prince of Darkness played his trombone like a madman: its brazen roarings were like the laughter of the damned. 117 conversions took place then and there. They prayed with the most touching sincerity and gratitude for Bodger, and for the anonymous donor of the 5000 pounds. Your father would not let his name be given.

Lomax. That was rather fine of the old man, you know. Most chaps would have wanted the advertisement.

Cusins. He said all the charitable institutions would be down on him like kites on a battle field if he gave his name.

Lady Britomart. That's Andrew all over. He never does a proper thing without giving an improper reason for it.

Cusins. He convinced me that I have all my life been doing improper things for proper reasons.

Lady Britomart. Adolphus: now that Barbara has left the Salvation Army, you had better leave it too. I will not have you playing that drum in the streets.

Cusins. Your orders are already obeyed, Lady Brit.

Barbara. Dolly: were you ever really in earnest about it? Would you have joined if you had never seen me?

Cusins [disingenuously] Well — er — well, possibly, as a collector of religions —

Lomax [cunningly] Not as a drummer, though, you know. You are a very clearheaded brainy chap, Cholly; and it must have been apparent to you that there is a certain amount of tosh about —

Lady Britomart. Charles: if you must drivel, drivel like a grown-up man and not like a schoolboy.

Lomax [out of countenance] Well, drivel is drivel, don't you know, whatever a man's age.

Lady Britomart. In good society in England, Charles, men drivel at all ages by repeating silly formulas with an air of wisdom. Schoolboys make their own formulas out of slang, like you. When they reach

your age, and get political private secretaryships and things of that sort, they drop slang and get their formulas out of The Spectator[2] or The Times. You had better confine yourself to The Times. You will find that there is a certain amount of tosh about The Times; but at least its language is reputable.

Lomax [overwhelmed] You are so awfully strong-minded, Lady Brit —

Lady Britomart. Rubbish! [Morrison comes in]. What is it?

Morrison. If you please, my lady, Mr Undershaft has just drove up to the door.

Lady Britomart. Well, let him in. [Morrison hesitates]. What's the matter with you?

Morrison. Shall I announce him, my lady; or is he at home here, so to speak, my lady?

Lady Britomart. Announce him.

Morrison. Thank you, my lady. You won't mind my asking, I hope. The occasion is in a manner of speaking new to me.

Lady Britomart. Quite right. Go and let him in.

Morrison. Thank you, my lady. [He withdraws].

Lady Britomart. Children: go and get ready. [Sarah and Barbara go upstairs for their out-of-door wrap]. Charles: go and tell Stephen to come down here in five minutes: you will find him in the drawing room. [Charles goes]. Adolphus: tell them to send round the carriage in about fifteen minutes. [Adolphus goes].

Morrison [at the door] Mr Undershaft.

Undershaft comes in. Morrison goes out.

Undershaft. Alone! How fortunate!

Lady Britomart [rising] Don't be sentimental, Andrew. Sit down. [She sits on the settee: he sits beside her, on her left. She comes to the point before he has time to breathe]. Sarah must have 800 pounds a year until Charles Lomax comes into his property. Barbara will need more, and need it permanently, because Adolphus hasn't any property.

Undershaft [resignedly] Yes, my dear: I will see to it. Anything else? for yourself, for instance?

Lady Britomart. I want to talk to you about Stephen.

Undershaft [rather wearily] Don't, my dear. Stephen doesn't interest me.

Lady Britomart. He does interest me. He is our son.

Undershaft. Do you really think so? He has induced us to bring him into the world; but he chose his parents very incongruously, I think. I see nothing of myself in him, and less of you.

Lady Britomart. Andrew: Stephen is an excellent son, and a most steady, capable, highminded young man. YOU are simply trying to find an excuse for disinheriting him.

Undershaft. My dear Biddy: the Undershaft tradition disinherits him. It would be dishonest of me to leave the cannon foundry to my son.

Lady Britomart. It would be most unnatural and improper of you to leave it to anyone else, Andrew. Do you suppose this wicked and immoral tradition can be kept up for ever? Do you pretend that Stephen could not carry on the foundry just as well as all the other sons of the big business houses?

Undershaft. Yes: he could learn the office routine without understanding the business, like all the other sons; and the firm would go on by its own momentum until the real Undershaft — probably an Italian or a German — would invent a new method and cut him out.

Lady Britomart. There is nothing that any Italian or German could do that Stephen could not do. And Stephen at least has breeding.

Undershaft. The son of a foundling! nonsense!

Lady Britomart. My son, Andrew! And even you may have good blood in your veins for all you know.

Undershaft. True. Probably I have. That is another argument in favor of a foundling.

2. A London weekly magazine devoted to political and current events.

Lady Britomart. Andrew: don't be aggravating. And don't be wicked. At present you are both.

Undershaft. This conversation is part of the Undershaft tradition, Biddy. Every Undershaft's wife has treated him to it ever since the house was founded. It is mere waste of breath. If the tradition be ever broken it will be for an abler man than Stephen.

Lady Britomart [pouting] Then go away.

Undershaft [deprecatory] Go away!

Lady Britomart. Yes: go away. If you will do nothing for Stephen, you are not wanted here. Go to your foundling, whoever he is; and look after him.

Undershaft. The fact is, Biddy —

Lady Britomart. Don't call me Biddy. I don't call you Andy.

Undershaft. I will not call my wife Britomart: it is not good sense. Seriously, my love, the Undershaft tradition has landed me in a difficulty. I am getting on in years; and my partner Lazarus has at last made a stand and insisted that the succession must be settled one way or the other; and of course he is quite right. You see, I haven't found a fit successor yet.

Lady Britomart [obstinately] There is Stephen.

Undershaft. That's just it: all the foundlings I can find are exactly like Stephen.

Lady Britomart. Andrew!!

Undershaft. I want a man with no relations and no schooling: that is, a man who would be out of the running altogether if he were not a strong man. And I can't find him. Every blessed foundling nowadays is snapped up in his infancy by Barnardo homes[3], or School Board officers, or Boards of Guardians; and if he shows the least ability, he is fastened on by schoolmasters; trained to win scholarships like a racehorse; crammed with secondhand ideas; drilled and disciplined in docility and what they call good taste; and lamed for life so that he is fit for nothing but teaching. If you want to keep the foundry in the family, you had better find an eligible foundling and marry him to Barbara.

Lady Britomart. Ah! Barbara! Your pet! You would sacrifice Stephen to Barbara.

Undershaft. Cheerfully. And you, my dear, would boil Barbara to make soup for Stephen.

Lady Britomart. Andrew: this is not a question of our likings and dislikings: it is a question of duty. It is your duty to make Stephen your successor.

Undershaft. Just as much as it is your duty to submit to your husband. Come, Biddy! these tricks of the governing class are of no use with me. I am one of the governing class myself; and it is waste of time giving tracts to a missionary. I have the power in this matter; and I am not to be humbugged into using it for your purposes.

Lady Britomart. Andrew: you can talk my head off; but you can't change wrong into right. And your tie is all on one side. Put it straight.

Undershaft [disconcerted] It won't stay unless it's pinned [he fumbles at it with childish grimaces]—

Stephen comes in.

Stephen [at the door] I beg your pardon [about to retire].

Lady Britomart. No: come in, Stephen. [Stephen comes forward to his mother's writing table.]

Undershaft [not very cordially] Good afternoon.

Stephen [coldly] Good afternoon.

Undershaft [to Lady Britomart] He knows all about the tradition, I suppose?

Lady Britomart. Yes. [To Stephen] It is what I told you last night, Stephen.

Undershaft [sulkily] I understand you want to come into the cannon business.

Stephen. *I* go into trade! Certainly not.

Undershaft [opening his eyes, greatly eased in mind and manner] Oh! in that case —!

3. In 1867, Dr. John Barnardo (1845-1905) set up an organization that placed destitute children in homes.

Lady Britomart. Cannons are not trade, Stephen. They are enterprise.

Stephen. I have no intention of becoming a man of business in any sense. I have no capacity for business and no taste for it. I intend to devote myself to politics.

Undershaft [rising] My dear boy: this is an immense relief to me. And I trust it may prove an equally good thing for the country. I was afraid you would consider yourself disparaged and slighted. [He moves towards Stephen as if to shake hands with him].

Lady Britomart [rising and interposing] Stephen: I cannot allow you to throw away an enormous property like this.

Stephen [stiffly] Mother: there must be an end of treating me as a child, if you please. [Lady Britomart recoils, deeply wounded by his tone]. Until last night I did not take your attitude seriously, because I did not think you meant it seriously. But I find now that you left me in the dark as to matters which you should have explained to me years ago. I am extremely hurt and offended. Any further discussion of my intentions had better take place with my father, as between one man and another.

Lady Britomart. Stephen! [She sits down again; and her eyes fill with tears].

Undershaft [with grave compassion] You see, my dear, it is only the big men who can be treated as children.

Stephen. I am sorry, mother, that you have forced me —

Undershaft [stopping him] Yes, yes, yes, yes: that's all right, Stephen. She wont interfere with you any more: your independence is achieved: you have won your latchkey. Don't rub it in; and above all, don't apologize. [He resumes his seat]. Now what about your future, as between one man and another — I beg your pardon, Biddy: as between two men and a woman.

Lady Britomart [who has pulled herself together strongly] I quite understand, Stephen. By all means go your own way if you feel strong enough. [Stephen sits down magisterially in the chair at the writing table with an air of affirming his majority].

Undershaft. It is settled that you do not ask for the succession to the cannon business.

Stephen. I hope it is settled that I repudiate the cannon business.

Undershaft. Come, come! Don't be so devilishly sulky: it's boyish. Freedom should be generous. Besides, I owe you a fair start in life in exchange for disinheriting you. You can't become prime minister all at once. Haven't you a turn for something? What about literature, art and so forth?

Stephen. I have nothing of the artist about me, either in faculty or character, thank Heaven!

Undershaft. A philosopher, perhaps? Eh?

Stephen. I make no such ridiculous pretension.

Undershaft. Just so. Well, there is the army, the navy, the Church, the Bar. The Bar requires some ability. What about the Bar?

Stephen. I have not studied law. And I am afraid I have not the necessary push — I believe that is the name barristers give to their vulgarity — for success in pleading.

Undershaft. Rather a difficult case, Stephen. Hardly anything left but the stage, is there? [Stephen makes an impatient movement]. Well, come! is there anything you know or care for?

Stephen [rising and looking at him steadily] I know the difference between right and wrong.

Undershaft [hugely tickled] You don't say so! What! no capacity for business, no knowledge of law, no sympathy with art, no pretension to philosophy; only a simple knowledge of the secret that has puzzled all the philosophers, baffled all the lawyers, muddled all the men of business, and ruined most of the artists: the secret of right and wrong. Why, man, you're a genius, master of masters, a god! At twenty-four, too!

Stephen [keeping his temper with difficulty] You are pleased to be facetious. I pretend to nothing more than any honorable English gentleman claims as his birthright [he sits down angrily].

Undershaft. Oh, that's everybody's birthright. Look at poor little Jenny Hill, the Salvation lassie! she

would think you were laughing at her if you asked her to stand up in the street and teach grammar or geography or mathematics or even drawing room dancing; but it never occurs to her to doubt that she can teach morals and religion. You are all alike, you respectable people. You can't tell me the bursting strain of a ten-inch gun, which is a very simple matter; but you all think you can tell me the bursting strain of a man under temptation. You daren't handle high explosives; but you're all ready to handle honesty and truth and justice and the whole duty of man, and kill one another at that game. What a country! what a world!

Lady Britomart [uneasily] What do you think he had better do, Andrew?

Undershaft. Oh, just what he wants to do. He knows nothing; and he thinks he knows everything. That points clearly to a political career. Get him a private secretaryship to someone who can get him an Under Secretaryship; and then leave him alone. He will find his natural and proper place in the end on the Treasury bench.

Stephen [springing up again] I am sorry, sir, that you force me to forget the respect due to you as my father. I am an Englishman; and I will not hear the Government of my country insulted. [He thrusts his hands in his pockets, and walks angrily across to the window].

Undershaft [with a touch of brutality] The government of your country! *I* am the government of your country: I, and Lazarus. Do you suppose that you and half a dozen amateurs like you, sitting in a row in that foolish gabble shop, can govern Undershaft and Lazarus? No, my friend: you will do what pays US. You will make war when it suits us, and keep peace when it doesn't. You will find out that trade requires certain measures when we have decided on those measures. When I want anything to keep my dividends up, you will discover that my want is a national need. When other people want something to keep my dividends down, you will call out the police and military. And in return you shall have the support and applause of my newspapers, and the delight of imagining that you are a great statesman. Government of your country! Be off with you, my boy, and play with your caucuses and leading articles and historic parties and great leaders and burning questions and the rest of your toys. *I* am going back to my counting house to pay the piper and call the tune.

Stephen [actually smiling, and putting his hand on his father's shoulder with indulgent patronage] Really, my dear father, it is impossible to be angry with you. You don't know how absurd all this sounds to ME. You are very properly proud of having been industrious enough to make money; and it is greatly to your credit that you have made so much of it. But it has kept you in circles where you are valued for your money and deferred to for it, instead of in the doubtless very oldfashioned and behind-the-times public school and university where I formed my habits of mind. It is natural for you to think that money governs England; but you must allow me to think I know better.

Undershaft. And what does govern England, pray?

Stephen. Character, father, character.

Undershaft. Whose character? Yours or mine?

Stephen. Neither yours nor mine, father, but the best elements in the English national character.

Undershaft. Stephen: I've found your profession for you. You're a born journalist. I'll start you with a hightoned weekly review. There!

Stephen goes to the smaller writing table and busies himself with his letters.

Sarah, Barbara, Lomax, and Cusins come in ready for walking. Barbara crosses the room to the window and looks out. Cusins drifts amiably to the armchair, and Lomax remains near the door, whilst Sarah comes to her mother.

Sarah. Go and get ready, mamma: the carriage is waiting. [Lady Britomart leaves the room.]

Undershaft [to Sarah] Good day, my dear. Good afternoon, Mr. Lomax.

Lomax [vaguely] Ahdedoo.

Undershaft [to Cusins] Quite well after last night, Euripides, eh?

Cusins. As well as can be expected.

Undershaft. That's right. [To Barbara] So you are coming to see my death and devastation factory, Barbara?

Barbara [at the window] You came yesterday to see my salvation factory. I promised you a return visit.

Lomax [coming forward between Sarah and Undershaft] You'll find it awfully interesting. I've been through the Woolwich Arsenal; and it gives you a ripping feeling of security, you know, to think of the lot of beggars we could kill if it came to fighting. [To Undershaft, with sudden solemnity] Still, it must be rather an awful reflection for you, from the religious point of view as it were. You're getting on, you know, and all that.

Sarah. You don't mind Cholly's imbecility, papa, do you?

Lomax [much taken aback] Oh I say!

Undershaft. Mr Lomax looks at the matter in a very proper spirit, my dear.

Lomax. Just so. That's all I meant, I assure you.

Sarah. Are you coming, Stephen?

Stephen. Well, I am rather busy — er — [Magnanimously] Oh well, yes: I'll come. That is, if there is room for me.

Undershaft. I can take two with me in a little motor I am experimenting with for field use. You won't mind its being rather unfashionable. It's not painted yet; but it's bullet proof.

Lomax [appalled at the prospect of confronting Wilton Crescent in an unpainted motor] Oh I say!

Sarah. The carriage for me, thank you. Barbara doesn't mind what she's seen in.

Lomax. I say, Dolly old chap: do you really mind the car being a guy[4]? Because of course if you do I'll go in it. Still —

Cusins. I prefer it.

Lomax. Thanks awfully, old man. Come, Sarah. [He hurries out to secure his seat in the carriage. Sarah follows him].

Cusins. [moodily walking across to Lady Britomart's writing table] Why are we two coming to this Works Department of Hell? that is what I ask myself.

Barbara. I have always thought of it as a sort of pit where lost creatures with blackened faces stirred up smoky fires and were driven and tormented by my father? Is it like that, dad?

Undershaft [scandalized] My dear! It is a spotlessly clean and beautiful hillside town.

Cusins. With a Methodist chapel? Oh do say there's a Methodist chapel.

Undershaft. There are two: a primitive one and a sophisticated one. There is even an Ethical Society[5]; but it is not much patronized, as my men are all strongly religious. In the High Explosives Sheds they object to the presence of Agnostics[6] as unsafe.

Cusins. And yet they don't object to you!

Barbara. Do they obey all your orders?

Undershaft. I never give them any orders. When I speak to one of them it is "Well, Jones, is the baby doing well? and has Mrs Jones made a good recovery?" "Nicely, thank you, sir." And that's all.

Cusins. But Jones has to be kept in order. How do you maintain discipline among your men?

Undershaft. I don't. They do. You see, the one thing Jones won't stand is any rebellion from the man under him, or any assertion of social equality between the wife of the man with 4 shillings a week less than himself and Mrs Jones! Of course they all rebel against me, theoretically. Practically, every man

4. Something or someone of frightful appearance, probably an allusion to effigies of Guy Fawkes, the leader of the Gunpowder Plot, November 5, 1605.

5. A free-thought society whose first London chapel was built at South Place in Finsbury, central London.

6. Term coined by T. H. Huxley in 1869 to describe those who withold their assent from whatever is incapable of proof (e.g., the existence of God).

of them keeps the man just below him in his place. I never meddle with them. I never bully them. I don't even bully Lazarus. I say that certain things are to be done; but I don't order anybody to do them. I don't say, mind you, that there is no ordering about and snubbing and even bullying. The men snub the boys and order them about; the carmen snub the sweepers; the artisans snub the unskilled laborers; the foremen drive and bully both the laborers and artisans; the assistant engineers find fault with the foremen; the chief engineers drop on the assistants; the departmental managers worry the chiefs; and the clerks have tall hats and hymnbooks and keep up the social tone by refusing to associate on equal terms with anybody. The result is a colossal profit, which comes to me.

Cusins [revolted] You really are a — well, what I was saying yesterday.

Barbara. What was he saying yesterday?

Undershaft. Never mind, my dear. He thinks I have made you unhappy. Have I?

Barbara. Do you think I can be happy in this vulgar silly dress? I! who have worn the uniform. Do you understand what you have done to me? Yesterday I had a man's soul in my hand. I set him in the way of life with his face to salvation. But when we took your money he turned back to drunkenness and derision. [With intense conviction] I will never forgive you that. If I had a child, and you destroyed its body with your explosives — if you murdered Dolly with your horrible guns — I could forgive you if my forgiveness would open the gates of heaven to you. But to take a human soul from me, and turn it into the soul of a wolf! that is worse than any murder.

Undershaft. Does my daughter despair so easily? Can you strike a man to the heart and leave no mark on him?

Barbara [her face lighting up] Oh, you are right: he can never be lost now: where was my faith?

Cusins. Oh, clever clever devil!

Barbara. You may be a devil; but God speaks through you sometimes. [She takes her father's hands and kisses them]. You have given me back my happiness: I feel it deep down now, though my spirit is troubled.

Undershaft. You have learnt something. That always feels at first as if you had lost something.

Barbara. Well, take me to the factory of death, and let me learn something more. There must be some truth or other behind all this frightful irony. Come, Dolly. [She goes out].

Cusins. My guardian angel! [To Undershaft] Avaunt[7]! [He follows Barbara].

Stephen [quietly, at the writing table] You must not mind Cusins, father. He is a very amiable good fellow; but he is a Greek scholar and naturally a little eccentric.

Undershaft. Ah, quite so. Thank you, Stephen. Thank you. [He goes out].

Stephen smiles patronizingly; buttons his coat responsibly; and crosses the room to the door. Lady Britomart, dressed for out-of-doors, opens it before he reaches it. She looks round far the others; looks at Stephen; and turns to go without a word.

Stephen [embarrassed] Mother —

Lady Britomart. Don't be apologetic, Stephen. And don't forget that you have outgrown your mother. [She goes out].

Perivale St Andrews lies between two Middlesex hills, half climbing the northern one. It is an almost smokeless town of white walls, roofs of narrow green slates or red tiles, tall trees, domes, campaniles, and slender chimney shafts, beautifully situated and beautiful in itself. The best view of it is obtained from the crest of a slope about half a mile to the east, where the high explosives are dealt with. The foundry lies hidden in the depths between, the tops of its chimneys sprouting like huge skittles[8] into the middle distance. Across the crest runs a platform of concrete, with a parapet which suggests a

7. Be gone. A command directed at the Devil.
8. The pins used in a game similar to bowling.

fortification, because there is a huge cannon of the obsolete Woolwich Infant pattern peering across it at the town. The cannon is mounted on an experimental gun carriage: possibly the original model of the Undershaft disappearing rampart gun alluded to by Stephen. The parapet has a high step inside which serves as a seat.

Barbara is leaning over the parapet, looking towards the town. On her right is the cannon; on her left the end of a shed raised on piles, with a ladder of three or four steps up to the door, which opens outwards and has a little wooden landing at the threshold, with a fire bucket in the corner of the landing. The parapet stops short of the shed, leaving a gap which is the beginning of the path down the hill through the foundry to the town. Behind the cannon is a trolley carrying a huge conical bombshell, with a red band painted on it. Further from the parapet, on the same side, is a deck chair, near the door of an office, which, like the sheds, is of the lightest possible construction.

Cusins arrives by the path from the town.

Barbara. Well?

Cusins. Not a ray of hope. Everything perfect, wonderful, real. It only needs a cathedral to be a heavenly city instead of a hellish one.

Barbara. Have you found out whether they have done anything for old Peter Shirley.

Cusins. They have found him a job as gatekeeper and timekeeper. He's frightfully miserable. He calls the timekeeping brainwork, and says he isn't used to it; and his gate lodge is so splendid that he's ashamed to use the rooms, and skulks in the scullery.

Barbara. Poor Peter!

Stephen arrives from the town. He carries a fieldglass.

Stephen [enthusiastically] Have you two seen the place? Why did you leave us?

Cusins. I wanted to see everything I was not intended to see; and Barbara wanted to make the men talk.

Stephen. Have you found anything discreditable?

Cusins. No. They call him Dandy Andy and are proud of his being a cunning old rascal; but it's all horribly, frightfully, immorally, unanswerably perfect.

Sarah arrives.

Sarah. Heavens! what a place! [She crosses to the trolley]. Did you see the nursing home!? [She sits down on the shell].

Stephen. Did you see the libraries and schools!?

Sarah. Did you see the ballroom and the banqueting chamber in the Town Hall!?

Stephen. Have you gone into the insurance fund, the pension fund, the building society, the various applications of co-operation[9]!?

Undershaft comes from the office, with a sheaf of telegrams in his hands.

Undershaft. Well, have you seen everything? I'm sorry I was called away. [Indicating the telegrams] News from Manchuria[10].

Stephen. Good news, I hope.

Undershaft. Very.

Stephen. Another Japanese victory?

Undershaft. Oh, I don't know. Which side wins does not concern us here. No: the good news is that the aerial battleship is a tremendous success. At the first trial it has wiped out a fort with three hundred soldiers in it.

Cusins [from the platform] Dummy soldiers?

9. Co-operative Movement, founded by Robert Owen (1771-1858) characterized by shops and businesses that were jointly owned by the workers.
10. Site of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905).

Undershaft. No: the real thing. [Cusins and Barbara exchange glances. Then Cusins sits on the step and buries his face in his hands. Barbara gravely lays her hand on his shoulder, and he looks up at her in a sort of whimsical desperation]. Well, Stephen, what do you think of the place?

Stephen. Oh, magnificent. A perfect triumph of organization. Frankly, my dear father, I have been a fool: I had no idea of what it all meant — of the wonderful forethought, the power of organization, the administrative capacity, the financial genius, the colossal capital it represents. I have been repeating to myself as I came through your streets "Peace hath her victories no less renowned than War.[11]" I have only one misgiving about it all.

Undershaft. Out with it.

Stephen. Well, I cannot help thinking that all this provision for every want of your workmen may sap their independence and weaken their sense of responsibility. And greatly as we enjoyed our tea at that splendid restaurant — how they gave us all that luxury and cake and jam and cream for threepence I really cannot imagine!— still you must remember that restaurants break up home life. Look at the continent, for instance! Are you sure so much pampering is really good for the men's characters?

Undershaft. Well you see, my dear boy, when you are organizing civilization you have to make up your mind whether trouble and anxiety are good things or not. If you decide that they are, then, I take it, you simply don't organize civilization; and there you are, with trouble and anxiety enough to make us all angels! But if you decide the other way, you may as well go through with it. However, Stephen, our characters are safe here. A sufficient dose of anxiety is always provided by the fact that we may be blown to smithereens at any moment.

Sarah. By the way, papa, where do you make the explosives?

Undershaft. In separate little sheds, like that one. When one of them blows up, it costs very little; and only the people quite close to it are killed.

Stephen, who is quite close to it, looks at it rather scaredly, and moves away quickly to the cannon. At the same moment the door of the shed is thrown abruptly open; and a foreman in overalls and list slippers comes out on the little landing and holds the door open for Lomax, who appears in the doorway.

Lomax [with studied coolness] My good fellow: you needn't get into a state of nerves. Nothing's going to happen to you; and I suppose it wouldn't be the end of the world if anything did. A little bit of British pluck is what you want, old chap. [He descends and strolls across to Sarah].

Undershaft [to the foreman] Anything wrong, Bilton?

Bilton [with ironic calm] Gentleman walked into the high explosives shed and lit a cigaret, sir: that's all.

Undershaft. Ah, quite so. [To Lomax] Do you happen to remember what you did with the match?

Lomax. Oh come! I'm not a fool. I took jolly good care to blow it out before I chucked it away.

Bilton. The top of it was red hot inside, sir.

Lomax. Well, suppose it was! I didn't chuck it into any of your messes.

Undershaft. Think no more of it, Mr Lomax. By the way, would you mind lending me your matches?

Lomax [offering his box] Certainly.

Undershaft. Thanks. [He pockets the matches].

Lomax [lecturing to the company generally] You know, these high explosives don't go off like gunpowder, except when they're in a gun. When they're spread loose, you can put a match to them without the least risk: they just burn quietly like a bit of paper. [Warming to the scientific interest of the subject] Did you know that Undershaft? Have you ever tried?

Undershaft. Not on a large scale, Mr Lomax. Bilton will give you a sample of gun cotton when you are leaving if you ask him. You can experiment with it at home. [Bilton looks puzzled].

11. See sonnet, "To the Lord General Cromwell, May 1652" by John Milton (1608-1674).

Sarah. Bilton will do nothing of the sort, papa. I suppose it's your business to blow up the Russians and Japs; but you might really stop short of blowing up poor Cholly. [Bilton gives it up and retires into the shed].

Lomax. My ownest, there is no danger. [He sits beside her on the shell].

Lady Britomart arrives from the town with a bouquet.

Lady Britomart [coming impetuously between Undershaft and the deck chair] Andrew: you shouldn't have let me see this place.

Undershaft. Why, my dear?

Lady Britomart. Never mind why: you shouldn't have: that's all. To think of all that [indicating the town] being yours! and that you have kept it to yourself all these years!

Undershaft. It does not belong to me. I belong to it. It is the Undershaft inheritance.

Lady Britomart. It is not. Your ridiculous cannons and that noisy banging foundry may be the Undershaft inheritance; but all that plate and linen, all that furniture and those houses and orchards and gardens belong to us. They belong to me: they are not a man's business. I won't give them up. You must be out of your senses to throw them all away; and if you persist in such folly, I will call in a doctor.

Undershaft [stooping to smell the bouquet] Where did you get the flowers, my dear?

Lady Britomart. Your men presented them to me in your William Morris[12] Labor Church.

Cusins [springing up] Oh! It needed only that. A Labor Church!

Lady Britomart. Yes, with Morris's words in mosaic letters ten feet high round the dome. NO MAN IS GOOD ENOUGH TO BE ANOTHER MAN'S MASTER. The cynicism of it!

Undershaft. It shocked the men at first, I am afraid. But now they take no more notice of it than of the ten commandments in church.

Lady Britomart. Andrew: you are trying to put me off the subject of the inheritance by profane jokes. Well, you shan't. I don't ask it any longer for Stephen: he has inherited far too much of your perversity to be fit for it. But Barbara has rights as well as Stephen. Why should not Adolphus succeed to the inheritance? I could manage the town for him; and he can look after the cannons, if they are really necessary.

Undershaft. I should ask nothing better if Adolphus were a foundling. He is exactly the sort of new blood that is wanted in English business. But he's not a foundling; and there's an end of it.

Cusins [diplomatically] Not quite. [They all turn and stare at him. He comes from the platform past the shed to Undershaft]. I think — Mind! I am not committing myself in any way as to my future course — but I think the foundling difficulty can be got over.

Undershaft. What do you mean?

Cusins. Well, I have something to say which is in the nature of a confession.

Sarah. {

Lady Britomart. { Confession!

Barbara. {

Stephen. {

Lomax. Oh I say!

Cusins. Yes, a confession. Listen, all. Until I met Barbara I thought myself in the main an honorable, truthful man, because I wanted the approval of my conscience more than I wanted anything else. But the moment I saw Barbara, I wanted her far more than the approval of my conscience.

Lady Britomart. Adolphus!

Cusins. It is true. You accused me yourself, Lady Brit, of joining the Army to worship Barbara; and so I did. She bought my soul like a flower at a street corner; but she bought it for herself.

12. William Morris (1834-1896). Utopian socialist and author of *News from Nowhere* (1890).

Undershaft. What! Not for Dionysos or another?

Cusins. Dionysos and all the others are in herself. I adored what was divine in her, and was therefore a true worshipper. But I was romantic about her too. I thought she was a woman of the people, and that a marriage with a professor of Greek would be far beyond the wildest social ambitions of her rank.

Lady Britomart. Adolphus!!

Lomax. Oh I say!!!

Cusins. When I learnt the horrible truth —

Lady Britomart. What do you mean by the horrible truth, pray?

Cusins. That she was enormously rich; that her grandfather was an earl; that her father was the Prince of Darkness —

Undershaft. Chut!

Cusins.— and that I was only an adventurer trying to catch a rich wife, then I stooped to deceive about my birth.

Lady Britomart. Your birth! Now Adolphus, don't dare to make up a wicked story for the sake of these wretched cannons. Remember: I have seen photographs of your parents; and the Agent General for South Western Australia knows them personally and has assured me that they are most respectable married people.

Cusins. So they are in Australia; but here they are outcasts. Their marriage is legal in Australia, but not in England[13]. My mother is my father's deceased wife's sister; and in this island I am consequently a foundling. [Sensation]. Is the subterfuge good enough, Machiavelli?

Undershaft [thoughtfully] Biddy: this may be a way out of the difficulty.

Lady Britomart. Stuff! A man can't make cannons any the better for being his own cousin instead of his proper self [she sits down in the deck chair with a bounce that expresses her downright contempt for their casuistry[14].]

Undershaft [to Cusins] You are an educated man. That is against the tradition.

Cusins. Once in ten thousand times it happens that the schoolboy is a born master of what they try to teach him. Greek has not destroyed my mind: it has nourished it. Besides, I did not learn it at an English public school.

Undershaft. Hm! Well, I cannot afford to be too particular: you have cornered the foundling market. Let it pass. You are eligible, Euripides: you are eligible.

Barbara [coming from the platform and interposing between Cusins and Undershaft] Dolly: yesterday morning, when Stephen told us all about the tradition, you became very silent; and you have been strange and excited ever since. Were you thinking of your birth then?

Cusins. When the finger of Destiny suddenly points at a man in the middle of his breakfast, it makes him thoughtful. [Barbara turns away sadly and stands near her mother, listening perturbedly].

Undershaft. Aha! You have had your eye on the business, my young friend, have you?

Cusins. Take care! There is an abyss of moral horror between me and your accursed aerial battleships.

Undershaft. Never mind the abyss for the present. Let us settle the practical details and leave your final decision open. You know that you will have to change your name. Do you object to that?

Cusins. Would any man named Adolphus — any man called Dolly!— object to be called something else?

Undershaft. Good. Now, as to money! I propose to treat you handsomely from the beginning. You shall start at a thousand a year.

Cusins. [with sudden heat, his spectacles twinkling with mischief] A thousand! You dare offer a

13. Marriage between a man and his dead wife's sister was illegal at the time Shaw was writing *Major Barbara*.

14. Equivocal or specious reasoning.

miserable thousand to the son-in-law of a millionaire! No, by Heavens, Machiavelli! you shall not cheat me. You cannot do without me; and I can do without you. I must have two thousand five hundred a year for two years. At the end of that time, if I am a failure, I go. But if I am a success, and stay on, you must give me the other five thousand.

Undershaft. What other five thousand?

Cusins. To make the two years up to five thousand a year. The two thousand five hundred is only half pay in case I should turn out a failure. The third year I must have ten per cent on the profits.

Undershaft [taken aback] Ten per cent! Why, man, do you know what my profits are?

Cusins. Enormous, I hope: otherwise I shall require twenty-five per cent.

Undershaft. But, Mr Cusins, this is a serious matter of business. You are not bringing any capital into the concern.

Cusins. What! no capital! Is my mastery of Greek no capital? Is my access to the subtlest thought, the loftiest poetry yet attained by humanity, no capital? my character! my intellect! my life! my career! what Barbara calls my soul! are these no capital? Say another word; and I double my salary.

Undershaft. Be reasonable —

Cusins [peremptorily] Mr Undershaft: you have my terms. Take them or leave them.

Undershaft [recovering himself] Very well. I note your terms; and I offer you half.

Cusins [disgusted] Half!

Undershaft [firmly] Half.

Cusins. You call yourself a gentleman; and you offer me half!!

Undershaft. I do not call myself a gentleman; but I offer you half.

Cusins. This to your future partner! your successor! your son-in-law!

Barbara. You are selling your own soul, Dolly, not mine. Leave me out of the bargain, please.

Undershaft. Come! I will go a step further for Barbara's sake. I will give you three fifths; but that is my last word.

Cusins. Done!

Lomax. Done in the eye. Why, *I* only get eight hundred, you know.

Cusins. By the way, Mac, I am a classical scholar, not an arithmetical one. Is three fifths more than half or less?

Undershaft. More, of course.

Cusins. I would have taken two hundred and fifty. How you can succeed in business when you are willing to pay all that money to a University don who is obviously not worth a junior clerk's wages!— well! What will Lazarus say?

Undershaft. Lazarus is a gentle romantic Jew who cares for nothing but string quartets and stalls at fashionable theatres. He will get the credit of your rapacity in money matters, as he has hitherto had the credit of mine. You are a shark of the first order, Euripides. So much the better for the firm!

Barbara. Is the bargain closed, Dolly? Does your soul belong to him now?

Cusins. No: the price is settled: that is all. The real tug of war is still to come. What about the moral question?

Lady Britomart. There is no moral question in the matter at all, Adolphus. You must simply sell cannons and weapons to people whose cause is right and just, and refuse them to foreigners and criminals.

Undershaft [determinedly] No: none of that. You must keep the true faith of an Armorer, or you don't come in here.

Cusins. What on earth is the true faith of an Armorer?

Undershaft. To give arms to all men who offer an honest price for them, without respect of persons or principles: to aristocrat and republican, to Nihilist and Tsar, to Capitalist and Socialist, to Protestant and

Catholic, to burglar and policeman, to black man white man and yellow man, to all sorts and conditions, all nationalities, all faiths, all follies, all causes and all crimes. The first Undershaft wrote up in his shop IF GOD GAVE THE HAND, LET NOT MAN WITHHOLD THE SWORD. The second wrote up ALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO FIGHT: NONE HAVE THE RIGHT TO JUDGE. The third wrote up TO MAN THE WEAPON: TO HEAVEN THE VICTORY. The fourth had no literary turn; so he did not write up anything; but he sold cannons to Napoleon under the nose of George the Third. The fifth wrote up PEACE SHALL NOT PREVAIL SAVE WITH A SWORD IN HER HAND. The sixth, my master, was the best of all. He wrote up NOTHING IS EVER DONE IN THIS WORLD UNTIL MEN ARE PREPARED TO KILL ONE ANOTHER IF IT IS NOT DONE. After that, there was nothing left for the seventh to say. So he wrote up, simply, UNASHAMED.

Cusins. My good Machiavelli, I shall certainly write something up on the wall; only, as I shall write it in Greek, you won't be able to read it. But as to your Armorer's faith, if I take my neck out of the noose of my own morality I am not going to put it into the noose of yours. I shall sell cannons to whom I please and refuse them to whom I please. So there!

Undershaft. From the moment when you become Andrew Undershaft, you will never do as you please again. Don't come here lusting for power, young man.

Cusins. If power were my aim I should not come here for it. YOU have no power.

Undershaft. None of my own, certainly.

Cusins. I have more power than you, more will. You do not drive this place: it drives you. And what drives the place?

Undershaft [enigmatically] A will of which I am a part.

Barbara [startled] Father! Do you know what you are saying; or are you laying a snare for my soul?

Cusins. Don't listen to his metaphysics, Barbara. The place is driven by the most rascally part of society, the money hunters, the pleasure hunters, the military promotion hunters; and he is their slave.

Undershaft. Not necessarily. Remember the Armorer's Faith. I will take an order from a good man as cheerfully as from a bad one. If you good people prefer preaching and shirking to buying my weapons and fighting the rascals, don't blame me. I can make cannons: I cannot make courage and conviction. Bah! You tire me, Euripides, with your morality mongering. Ask Barbara: SHE understands. [He suddenly takes Barbara's hands, and looks powerfully into her eyes]. Tell him, my love, what power really means.

Barbara [hypnotized] Before I joined the Salvation Army, I was in my own power; and the consequence was that I never knew what to do with myself. When I joined it, I had not time enough for all the things I had to do.

Undershaft [approvingly] Just so. And why was that, do you suppose?

Barbara. Yesterday I should have said, because I was in the power of God. [She resumes her self-possession, withdrawing her hands from his with a power equal to his own]. But you came and showed me that I was in the power of Bodger and Undershaft. Today I feel — oh! how can I put it into words? Sarah: do you remember the earthquake at Cannes, when we were little children?— how little the surprise of the first shock mattered compared to the dread and horror of waiting for the second? That is how I feel in this place today. I stood on the rock I thought eternal; and without a word of warning it reeled and crumbled under me. I was safe with an infinite wisdom watching me, an army marching to Salvation with me; and in a moment, at a stroke of your pen in a cheque book, I stood alone; and the heavens were empty. That was the first shock of the earthquake: I am waiting for the second.

Undershaft. Come, come, my daughter! Don't make too much of your little tinpot tragedy. What do we do here when we spend years of work and thought and thousands of pounds of solid cash on a new gun or an aerial battleship that turns out just a hairsbreadth wrong after all? Scrap it. Scrap it without wasting another hour or another pound on it. Well, you have made for yourself something that you call a

morality or a religion or what not. It doesn't fit the facts. Well, scrap it. Scrap it and get one that does fit. That is what is wrong with the world at present. It scraps its obsolete steam engines and dynamos; but it won't scrap its old prejudices and its old moralities and its old religions and its old political constitutions. What's the result? In machinery it does very well; but in morals and religion and politics it is working at a loss that brings it nearer bankruptcy every year. Don't persist in that folly. If your old religion broke down yesterday, get a newer and a better one for tomorrow.

Barbara. Oh how gladly I would take a better one to my soul! But you offer me a worse one. [Turning on him with sudden vehemence]. Justify yourself: show me some light through the darkness of this dreadful place, with its beautifully clean workshops, and respectable workmen, and model homes.

Undershaft. Cleanliness and respectability do not need justification, Barbara: they justify themselves. I see no darkness here, no dreadfulness. In your Salvation shelter I saw poverty, misery, cold and hunger. You gave them bread and treacle and dreams of heaven. I give from thirty shillings a week to twelve thousand a year. They find their own dreams; but I look after the drainage.

Barbara. And their souls?

Undershaft. I save their souls just as I saved yours.

Barbara [revolted] You saved my soul! What do you mean?

Undershaft. I fed you and clothed you and housed you. I took care that you should have money enough to live handsomely — more than enough; so that you could be wasteful, careless, generous. That saved your soul from the seven deadly sins.

Barbara [bewildered] The seven deadly sins!

Undershaft. Yes, the deadly seven. [Counting on his fingers] Food, clothing, firing, rent, taxes, respectability and children. Nothing can lift those seven millstones from Man's neck but money; and the spirit cannot soar until the millstones are lifted. I lifted them from your spirit. I enabled Barbara to become Major Barbara; and I saved her from the crime of poverty.

Cusins. Do you call poverty a crime?

Undershaft. The worst of crimes. All the other crimes are virtues beside it: all the other dishonors are chivalry itself by comparison. Poverty blights whole cities; spreads horrible pestilences; strikes dead the very souls of all who come within sight, sound or smell of it. What you call crime is nothing: a murder here and a theft there, a blow now and a curse then: what do they matter? they are only the accidents and illnesses of life: there are not fifty genuine professional criminals in London. But there are millions of poor people, abject people, dirty people, ill fed, ill clothed people. They poison us morally and physically: they kill the happiness of society: they force us to do away with our own liberties and to organize unnatural cruelties for fear they should rise against us and drag us down into their abyss. Only fools fear crime: we all fear poverty. Pah! [turning on Barbara] you talk of your half-saved ruffian in West Ham: you accuse me of dragging his soul back to perdition. Well, bring him to me here; and I will drag his soul back again to salvation for you. Not by words and dreams; but by thirty-eight shillings a week, a sound house in a handsome street, and a permanent job. In three weeks he will have a fancy waistcoat; in three months a tall hat and a chapel sitting; before the end of the year he will shake hands with a duchess at a Primrose League[15] meeting, and join the Conservative Party.

Barbara. And will he be the better for that?

Undershaft. You know he will. Don't be a hypocrite, Barbara. He will be better fed, better housed, better clothed, better behaved; and his children will be pounds heavier and bigger. That will be better than an American cloth mattress in a shelter, chopping firewood, eating bread and treacle, and being forced to kneel down from time to time to thank heaven for it: knee drill, I think you call it. It is cheap work converting starving men with a Bible in one hand and a slice of bread in the other. I will undertake

15. British conservative political organization founded in 1883.

to convert West Ham to Mahometanism on the same terms. Try your hand on my men: their souls are hungry because their bodies are full.

Barbara. And leave the east end to starve?

Undershaft [his energetic tone dropping into one of bitter and brooding remembrance] I was an east ender. I moralized and starved until one day I swore that I would be a fullfed free man at all costs — that nothing should stop me except a bullet, neither reason nor morals nor the lives of other men. I said "Thou shalt starve ere I starve"; and with that word I became free and great. I was a dangerous man until I had my will: now I am a useful, beneficent, kindly person. That is the history of most self-made millionaires, I fancy. When it is the history of every Englishman we shall have an England worth living in.

Lady Britomart. Stop making speeches, Andrew. This is not the place for them.

Undershaft [punctured] My dear: I have no other means of conveying my ideas.

Lady Britomart. Your ideas are nonsense. You got oil because you were selfish and unscrupulous.

Undershaft. Not at all. I had the strongest scruples about poverty and starvation. Your moralists are quite unscrupulous about both: they make virtues of them. I had rather be a thief than a pauper. I had rather be a murderer than a slave. I don't want to be either; but if you force the alternative on me, then, by Heaven, I'll choose the braver and more moral one. I hate poverty and slavery worse than any other crimes whatsoever. And let me tell you this. Poverty and slavery have stood up for centuries to your sermons and leading articles: they will not stand up to my machine guns. Don't preach at them: don't reason with them. Kill them.

Barbara. Killing. Is that your remedy for everything?

Undershaft. It is the final test of conviction, the only lever strong enough to overturn a social system, the only way of saying Must. Let six hundred and seventy fools loose in the street; and three policemen can scatter them. But huddle them together in a certain house in Westminster[16]; and let them go through certain ceremonies and call themselves certain names until at last they get the courage to kill; and your six hundred and seventy fools become a government. Your pious mob fills up ballot papers and imagines it is governing its masters; but the ballot paper that really governs is the paper that has a bullet wrapped up in it.

Cusins. That is perhaps why, like most intelligent people, I never vote.

Undershaft Vote! Bah! When you vote, you only change the names of the cabinet. When you shoot, you pull down governments, inaugurate new epochs, abolish old orders and set up new. Is that historically true, Mr Learned Man, or is it not?

Cusins. It is historically true. I loathe having to admit it. I repudiate your sentiments. I abhor your nature. I defy you in every possible way. Still, it is true. But it ought not to be true.

Undershaft. Ought, ought, ought, ought, ought! Are you going to spend your life saying ought, like the rest of our moralists? Turn your oughts into shalls, man. Come and make explosives with me. Whatever can blow men up can blow society up. The history of the world is the history of those who had courage enough to embrace this truth. Have you the courage to embrace it, Barbara?

Lady Britomart. Barbara, I positively forbid you to listen to your father's abominable wickedness. And you, Adolphus, ought to know better than to go about saying that wrong things are true. What does it matter whether they are true if they are wrong?

Undershaft. What does it matter whether they are wrong if they are true?

Lady Britomart [rising] Children: come home instantly. Andrew: I am exceedingly sorry I allowed you to call on us. You are wickeder than ever. Come at once.

Barbara [shaking her head] It's no use running away from wicked people, mamma.

16. The House of Commons.

Lady Britomart. It is every use. It shows your disapprobation of them.

Barbara. It does not save them.

Lady Britomart. I can see that you are going to disobey me. Sarah: are you coming home or are you not?

Sarah. I daresay it's very wicked of papa to make cannons; but I don't think I shall cut him on that account.

Lomax [pouring oil on the troubled waters] The fact is, you know, there is a certain amount of tosh about this notion of wickedness. It doesn't work. You must look at facts. Not that I would say a word in favor of anything wrong; but then, you see, all sorts of chaps are always doing all sorts of things; and we have to fit them in somehow, don't you know. What I mean is that you can't go cutting everybody; and that's about what it comes to. [Their rapt attention to his eloquence makes him nervous] Perhaps I don't make myself clear.

Lady Britomart. You are lucidity itself, Charles. Because Andrew is successful and has plenty of money to give to Sarah, you will flatter him and encourage him in his wickedness.

Lomax [unruffled] Well, where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered[17], don't you know. [To Undershaft] Eh? What?

Undershaft. Precisely. By the way, may I call you Charles?

Lomax. Delighted. Cholly is the usual ticket.

Undershaft [to Lady Britomart] Biddy —

Lady Britomart [violently] Don't dare call me Biddy. Charles Lomax: you are a fool. Adolphus Cusins: you are a Jesuit[18]. Stephen: you are a prig. Barbara: you are a lunatic. Andrew: you are a vulgar tradesman. Now you all know my opinion; and my conscience is clear, at all events [she sits down again with a vehemence that almost wrecks the chair].

Undershaft. My dear, you are the incarnation of morality. [She snorts]. Your conscience is clear and your duty done when you have called everybody names. Come, Euripides! it is getting late; and we all want to get home. Make up your mind.

Cusins. Understand this, you old demon —

Lady Britomart. Adolphus!

Undershaft. Let him alone, Biddy. Proceed, Euripides.

Cusins. You have me in a horrible dilemma. I want Barbara.

Undershaft. Like all young men, you greatly exaggerate the difference between one young woman and another.

Barbara. Quite true, Dolly.

Cusins. I also want to avoid being a rascal.

Undershaft [with biting contempt] You lust for personal righteousness, for self-approval, for what you call a good conscience, for what Barbara calls salvation, for what I call patronizing people who are not so lucky as yourself.

Cusins. I do not: all the poet in me recoils from being a good man. But there are things in me that I must reckon with: pity —

Undershaft. Pity! The scavenger of misery.

Cusins. Well, love.

Undershaft. I know. You love the needy and the outcast: you love the oppressed races, the negro, the

17. See Matthew 24:28.

18. Member of the Society of Jesus, a Catholic organization founded by Ignatius Loyola in 1534. Cusins is using the term in its secondary sense (i.e., a casuist, a deceiver). See *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*.

Indian ryot[19], the Pole, the Irishman. Do you love the Japanese? Do you love the Germans? Do you love the English?

Cusins. No. Every true Englishman detests the English. We are the wickedest nation on earth; and our success is a moral horror.

Undershaft. That is what comes of your gospel of love, is it?

Cusins. May I not love even my father-in-law?

Undershaft. Who wants your love, man? By what right do you take the liberty of offering it to me? I will have your due heed and respect, or I will kill you. But your love! Damn your impertinence!

Cusins [grinning] I may not be able to control my affections, Mac.

Undershaft. You are fencing, Euripides. You are weakening: your grip is slipping. Come! try your last weapon. Pity and love have broken in your hand: forgiveness is still left.

Cusins. No: forgiveness is a beggar's refuge. I am with you there: we must pay our debts.

Undershaft. Well said. Come! you will suit me. Remember the words of Plato[20].

Cusins [starting] Plato! You dare quote Plato to me!

Undershaft. Plato says, my friend, that society cannot be saved until either the Professors of Greek take to making gunpowder, or else the makers of gunpowder become Professors of Greek.

Cusins. Oh, tempter, cunning tempter!

Undershaft. Come! choose, man, choose.

Cusins. But perhaps Barbara will not marry me if I make the wrong choice.

Barbara. Perhaps not.

Cusins [desperately perplexed] You hear —

Barbara. Father: do you love nobody?

Undershaft. I love my best friend.

Lady Britomart. And who is that, pray?

Undershaft. My bravest enemy. That is the man who keeps me up to the mark.

Cusins. You know, the creature is really a sort of poet in his way. Suppose he is a great man, after all!

Undershaft. Suppose you stop talking and make up your mind, my young friend.

Cusins. But you are driving me against my nature. I hate war.

Undershaft. Hatred is the coward's revenge for being intimidated. Dare you make war on war? Here are the means: my friend Mr Lomax is sitting on them.

Lomax [springing up] Oh I say! You don't mean that this thing is loaded, do you? My ownest: come off it.

Sarah [sitting placidly on the shell] If I am to be blown up, the more thoroughly it is done the better. Don't fuss, Cholly.

Lomax [to Undershaft, strongly remonstrant] Your own daughter, you know.

Undershaft. So I see. [To Cusins] Well, my friend, may we expect you here at six tomorrow morning?

Cusins [firmly] Not on any account. I will see the whole establishment blown up with its own dynamite before I will get up at five. My hours are healthy, rational hours eleven to five.

Undershaft. Come when you please: before a week you will come at six and stay until I turn you out for the sake of your health. [Calling] Bilton! [He turns to Lady Britomart, who rises]. My dear: let us leave these two young people to themselves for a moment. [Bilton comes from the shed]. I am going to take you through the gun cotton shed.

Bilton [barring the way] You can't take anything explosive in here, Sir.

Lady Britomart. What do you mean? Are you alluding to me?

19. Indian peasant.

20. Undershaft here plays with Plato's idea that philosophers must be the kings in an ideal state. See *The Republic*, 5.473d.

Bilton [unmoved] No, ma'am. Mr Undershaft has the other gentleman's matches in his pocket.

Lady Britomart [abruptly] Oh! I beg your pardon. [She goes into the shed].

Undershaft. Quite right, Bilton, quite right: here you are. [He gives Bilton the box of matches]. Come, Stephen. Come, Charles. Bring Sarah. [He passes into the shed].

Bilton opens the box and deliberately drops the matches into the fire-bucket.

Lomax. Oh I say! [Bilton stolidly hands him the empty box]. Infernal nonsense! Pure scientific ignorance! [He goes in].

Sarah. Am I all right, Bilton?

Bilton. You'll have to put on list slippers, miss: that's all. We've got em inside. [She goes in].

Stephen [very seriously to Cusins] Dolly, old fellow, think. Think before you decide. Do you feel that you are a sufficiently practical man? It is a huge undertaking, an enormous responsibility. All this mass of business will be Greek to you.

Cusins. Oh, I think it will be much less difficult than Greek.

Stephen. Well, I just want to say this before I leave you to yourselves. Don't let anything I have said about right and wrong prejudice you against this great chance in life. I have satisfied myself that the business is one of the highest character and a credit to our country. [Emotionally] I am very proud of my father. I— [Unable to proceed, he presses Cusins' hand and goes hastily into the shed, followed by Bilton].

Barbara and Cusins, left alone together, look at one another silently.

Cusins. Barbara: I am going to accept this offer.

Barbara. I thought you would.

Cusins. You understand, don't you, that I had to decide without consulting you. If I had thrown the burden of the choice on you, you would sooner or later have despised me for it.

Barbara. Yes: I did not want you to sell your soul for me any more than for this inheritance.

Cusins. It is not the sale of my soul that troubles me: I have sold it too often to care about that. I have sold it for a professorship. I have sold it for an income. I have sold it to escape being imprisoned for refusing to pay taxes for hangmen's ropes and unjust wars and things that I abhor. What is all human conduct but the daily and hourly sale of our souls for trifles? What I am now selling it for is neither money nor position nor comfort, but for reality and for power.

Barbara. You know that you will have no power, and that he has none.

Cusins. I know. It is not for myself alone. I want to make power for the world.

Barbara. I want to make power for the world too; but it must be spiritual power.

Cusins. I think all power is spiritual: these cannons will not go off by themselves. I have tried to make spiritual power by teaching Greek. But the world can never be really touched by a dead language and a dead civilization. The people must have power; and the people cannot have Greek. Now the power that is made here can be wielded by all men.

Barbara. Power to burn women's houses down and kill their sons and tear their husbands to pieces.

Cusins. You cannot have power for good without having power for evil too. Even mother's milk nourishes murderers as well as heroes. This power which only tears men's bodies to pieces has never been so horribly abused as the intellectual power, the imaginative power, the poetic, religious power that can enslave men's souls. As a teacher of Greek I gave the intellectual man weapons against the common man. I now want to give the common man weapons against the intellectual man. I love the common people. I want to arm them against the lawyer, the doctor, the priest, the literary man, the professor, the artist, and the politician, who, once in authority, are the most dangerous, disastrous, and tyrannical of all the fools, rascals, and impostors. I want a democratic power strong enough to force the intellectual oligarchy to use its genius for the general good or else perish.

Barbara. Is there no higher power than that [pointing to the shell]?

Cusins. Yes: but that power can destroy the higher powers just as a tiger can destroy a man: therefore man must master that power first. I admitted this when the Turks and Greeks were last at war[21]. My best pupil went out to fight for Hellas. My parting gift to him was not a copy of Plato's Republic, but a revolver and a hundred Undershaft cartridges. The blood of every Turk he shot — if he shot any — is on my head as well as on Undershaft's. That act committed me to this place for ever. Your father's challenge has beaten me. Dare I make war on war? I dare. I must. I will. And now, is it all over between us?

Barbara [touched by his evident dread of her answer] Silly baby Dolly! How could it be?

Cusins [overjoyed] Then you — you — you — Oh for my drum! [He flourishes imaginary drumsticks].

Barbara [angered by his levity] Take care, Dolly, take care. Oh, if only I could get away from you and from father and from it all! if I could have the wings of a dove and fly away to heaven!

Cusins. And leave me!

Barbara. Yes, you, and all the other naughty mischievous children of men. But I can't. I was happy in the Salvation Army for a moment. I escaped from the world into a paradise of enthusiasm and prayer and soul saving; but the moment our money ran short, it all came back to Bodger: it was he who saved our people: he, and the Prince of Darkness, my papa. Undershaft and Bodger: their hands stretch everywhere: when we feed a starving fellow creature, it is with their bread, because there is no other bread; when we tend the sick, it is in the hospitals they endow; if we turn from the churches they build, we must kneel on the stones of the streets they pave. As long as that lasts, there is no getting away from them. Turning our backs on Bodger and Undershaft is turning our backs on life.

Cusins. I thought you were determined to turn your back on the wicked side of life.

Barbara. There is no wicked side: life is all one. And I never wanted to shirk my share in whatever evil must be endured, whether it be sin or suffering. I wish I could cure you of middle-class ideas, Dolly.

Cusins [gasping] Middle cl —! A snub! A social snub to ME! from the daughter of a foundling!

Barbara. That is why I have no class, Dolly: I come straight out of the heart of the whole people. If I were middle-class I should turn my back on my father's business; and we should both live in an artistic drawingroom, with you reading the reviews in one corner, and I in the other at the piano, playing Schumann: both very superior persons, and neither of us a bit of use. Sooner than that, I would sweep out the guncotton shed, or be one of Bodger's barmaids. Do you know what would have happened if you had refused papa's offer?

Cusins. I wonder!

Barbara. I should have given you up and married the man who accepted it. After all, my dear old mother has more sense than any of you. I felt like her when I saw this place — felt that I must have it — that never, never, never could I let it go; only she thought it was the houses and the kitchen ranges and the linen and china, when it was really all the human souls to be saved: not weak souls in starved bodies, crying with gratitude or a scrap of bread and treacle, but fullfed, quarrelsome, snobbish, uppish creatures, all standing on their little rights and dignities, and thinking that my father ought to be greatly obliged to them for making so much money for him — and so he ought. That is where salvation is really wanted. My father shall never throw it in my teeth again that my converts were bribed with bread. [She is transfigured]. I have got rid of the bribe of bread. I have got rid of the bribe of heaven. Let God's work be done for its own sake: the work he had to create us to do because it cannot be done by living men and women. When I die, let him be in my debt, not I in his; and let me forgive him as becomes a woman of my rank.

Cusins. Then the way of life lies through the factory of death?

21. Thirty Days' War of 1897.

Barbara. Yes, through the raising of hell to heaven and of man to God, through the unveiling of an eternal light in the Valley of The Shadow[22]. [Seizing him with both hands] Oh, did you think my courage would never come back? did you believe that I was a deserter? that I, who have stood in the streets, and taken my people to my heart, and talked of the holiest and greatest things with them, could ever turn back and chatter foolishly to fashionable people about nothing in a drawingroom? Never, never, never, never: Major Barbara will die with the colors. Oh! and I have my dear little Dolly boy still; and he has found me my place and my work. Glory Hallelujah! [She kisses him].

Cusins. My dearest: consider my delicate health. I cannot stand as much happiness as you can.

Barbara. Yes: it is not easy work being in love with me, is it? But it's good for you. [She runs to the shed, and calls, childlike] Mamma! Mamma! [Bilton comes out of the shed, followed by Undershaft]. I want Mamma.

Undershaft. She is taking off her list slippers, dear. [He passes on to Cusins]. Well? What does she say?

Cusins. She has gone right up into the skies.

Lady Britomart [coming from the shed and stopping on the steps, obstructing Sarah, who follows with Lomax. Barbara clutches like a baby at her mother's skirt]. Barbara: when will you learn to be independent and to act and think for yourself? I know as well as possible what that cry of "Mamma, Mamma," means. Always running to me!

Sarah [touching Lady Britomart's ribs with her finger tips and imitating a bicycle horn] Pip! Pip!

Lady Britomart [highly indignant] How dare you say Pip! pip! to me, Sarah? You are both very naughty children. What do you want, Barbara?

Barbara. I want a house in the village to live in with Dolly. [Dragging at the skirt] Come and tell me which one to take.

Undershaft [to Cusins] Six o'clock tomorrow morning, my young friend.

22. See Psalm 23: "Yea thou I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

88.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

Major Barbara

1. Contrast Barbara with her brother Stephen.
2. Explain the Andrew Undershaft foundling tradition.
3. What challenge does Barbara level at her father in Act I?
4. Who is Barbara's grandfather?
5. Why does Bill Walker strike Jenny Hill?
6. What financial aid does Undershaft offer his three children?
7. What is Stephen's main criticism of Undershaft's treatment of his workers?
8. Does Nietzsche's definition of "Dionysian" (and "Apollonian") in *Birth of Tragedy* apply to Dolly's understanding of the term? See a good handbook of literary terms such as *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms*, ed. J.A. Cuddon; or *A Handbook to Literature*, Holman and Harmon; or *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, M.H. Abrams.
9. Why is winning Barbara's capitulation in the wager so important to Undershaft? Why does Barbara capitulate?
10. Discuss how Shaw explores the notion of class in the play.
11. Explore Shaw's presentation of men and women as it challenges or conforms to dramaturgical conventions of gender at the turn of the 20th century as well as today.
12. Who is Mrs. Baines, and what key announcement does she make?

Suggested Essay or Discussion Topics

1. Look up the term *psychomachia* in a good reference source such as your favourite glossary or handbook of literary terms. Is *Major Barbara* structured as a kind of psychomachia? If so, whose soul is being fought over? Who are the angelic and diabolical characters or tempters?
2. In what way is Undershaft a "Grand Inquisitor" figure?
3. Compare characters and situations from *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Major Barbara*.

How might Lady Bracknell be seen as a source character for Lady Britomart?

4. One critic suggests that in addition to the Spenserean allusion, Britomart's name also suggests "British Market." Refute or support with evidence.
5. Why does Shaw name Undershaft's business partner Lazarus? Be sure to read Chapter 16 from the Gospel of Luke as a starting point.
6. Discuss Charles "Cholly" Lomax as comic character.
7. What typical characteristics of a utopia do you find in the depiction of the community of Perivale St. Andrews in Act III?
8. Discuss any particularly useful changes to the play in Gabriel Pascal's 1941 film version of *Major Barbara*. Note that Shaw helped write the film script and published his screen version in 1946.
9. Explore the use of music in the play.
10. Discuss Rosalind Howard, Countess of Carlisle (1845-1921) as the source for Lady Britomart.
11. Discuss Gilbert Murray as Shaw's source for Adolphus Cusins.
12. Discuss the various comic techniques, especially characterization, that Shaw uses to keep his audience involved in the action of the play.

Resources

Major-Barbara-Study-Guide [pdf booklet by permission of the Shaw Festival, Niagara-on-the Lake]

Preface to Major Barbara

Richard F. Dietrich, *British and Irish Drama: 1890-1950*. A very good overview of *Major Barbara*. The entire book is online.

XII

Joseph Conrad (1857–1924)

89.

Biography



Figure 1: Joseph Conrad

Joseph Conrad was born in Berdyczow, which, at the time of his birth, on December 3, 1857, was a city in Ukraine. His birth name was Jozef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, anglicized years later when he became a British citizen. Before one of those border realignments that regularly occur in that part of the world, Berdyczow had been a part of the Kingdom of Poland. The distinction is important because Polish nationalism shaped Conrad's early years. His parents were Polish nobility, and Conrad's father, in addition to working as a writer and a translator, was a political activist, whose goal was to free Poland from Russian domination. For this, he was arrested and his family exiled to Vologda. Within seven years, both of Conrad's parents had died of tuberculosis and he was sent to live with his mother's brother, his Uncle Tadeusz, in Krakow.

Determined to be a sailor, Conrad left home at 16 and moved to Marseilles, France, where he began his apprenticeship, working entry-level positions on several merchant ships. His career floundered, however, when he learned that to continue this line of work he needed the permission from the Russian consul, who was more likely to conscript Conrad into the Russian army than grant permission. Moreover, Conrad had gambling debts he could not pay. In despair, he wounded himself in the chest in a half-hearted suicide attempt, which prompted his uncle to settle Conrad's debts and to help

him relocate to England. For the next 16 years, Conrad worked in the British mercantile marine, rising in rank to master mariner. In 1886, at the age of 29, he became a British citizen.

In 1890, Conrad captained a steamer up the Congo River, an adventure that inspired *Heart of Darkness*. As a Pole whose father was a political activist fighting to rebuild a nation ruthlessly conquered by other European powers, Conrad was sensitive to the exploitation and disruption that occurs when one culture will use any means, including aggressive military action, to impose its will upon another. The motive is often the theft of natural resources, such as oil, precious metals, or forests. In *Heart of Darkness*, it is ivory, valuable in Europe at the time for the manufacture of piano keys, elaborate chess pieces, jewelry, billiard balls, toiletry items, and ornaments of various kinds. Lured by the promise of wealth, adventurers and fortune hunters, with the blessing of Belgium's King Leopold, who took his cut, rushed to the Congo ready and eager to decimate the elephant population and harvest its ivory. *Heart of Darkness* was first published in three installments in 1899 in *Blackwoods Magazine*. In 1902, it was one of the stories in Conrad's book, *Youth, a Narrative, and Two Other Stories*. It is among Conrad's best-known works, and one of the great novellas in the English language.

By 1894, with the help of an inheritance from his uncle, Conrad's transition from sailor to writer was complete. He married, settled on a farm in Kent, and became a prolific writer, the author of some of the great works of the 20th century: *Lord Jim* (1899), *Typhoon* (1902), *Nostromo* (1904), *The Secret Agent* (1907), and *Under Western Eyes* (1911).

The plots of Conrad's stories often revolve around the relationship between an opinionated but ethical main character—Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim*—and another essentially decent man, tempted and corrupted by the promise of wealth and power. Nostromo, for example, the head of the longshoreman's union in a South American country in the midst of a revolution, is entrusted because of his reputation as the most brave and honourable of men to protect a shipment of silver, which the mine owner, Charles Gould, fears will fall into the hands of the revolutionaries. The boat in which Nostromo has hidden the silver is rammed by a warship belonging to the revolutionary forces. Nostromo saves and hides the silver on a deserted island, but he claims it sank with his boat. Embittered by his sense that the elite politicians and businessmen of his nation patronize him, Nostromo begins to recover the silver for himself until he is shot and killed by the island's lighthouse keeper who mistakes Nostromo for an intruder. Such plots, conflicts, and moral dilemmas make for complex stories with the characters developed with considerable psychological intensity, anticipating the work of Conrad's great successors: D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce.

Conrad's style also makes him one of the great novelists of the late-19th and early-20th centuries. His plots are rich and complex, often forsaking a linear narrative in favour of a recursive one, which adds depth and suspense to the story. He did not learn English until he was in his early twenties, and he always spoke with a heavy accent, yet he mastered the vocabulary and the rhythms of the language so thoroughly that the landscapes and the cityscapes that he renders, often in exquisite detail, come to life. His ear for dialogue is equally true.

After 1911, Conrad continued his impressive pace as a novelist and short story writer. Critics generally agree that his best work was behind him, although opinion on the merits of some of his later novels, *Chance* (1914), *Victory* (1915), and *The Shadow Line* (1917), is divided. Conrad certainly remained a popular novelist, whose works sold well, and who, despite heavy expenses and debts that resulted from a sometimes profligate lifestyle, became a wealthy man. Sales were helped by the stories' exotic settings and spirit of romantic adventure, which appealed to an ever-growing late-Victorian readership.

Conrad was hard at work, lecturing and writing, until his death in August 1924, with his final novel, *Suspense*, left unfinished.

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90.

Heart of Darkness: Chapter 1

Joseph Conrad

The *Nellie*, a cruising yawl[1], swung to her anchor without a flutter of the sails, and was at rest. The flood had made[2], the wind was nearly calm, and being bound down the river, the only thing for it was to come to and wait for the turn of the tide.

The sea-reach of the Thames stretched before us like the beginning of an interminable waterway. In the offing the sea and the sky were welded together without a joint, and in the luminous space the tanned sails of the barges drifting up with the tide seemed to stand still in red clusters of canvas sharply peaked, with gleams of varnished sprits. A haze rested on the low shores that ran out to sea in vanishing flatness. The air was dark above Gravesend[3], and farther back still seemed condensed into a mournful gloom, brooding motionless over the biggest, and the greatest, town on earth.

The Director of Companies was our captain and our host. We four affectionately watched his back as he stood in the bows looking to seaward. On the whole river there was nothing that looked half so nautical. He resembled a pilot, which to a seaman is trustworthiness personified. It was difficult to realize his work was not out there in the luminous estuary, but behind him, within the brooding gloom.

Between us there was, as I have already said somewhere, the bond of the sea. Besides holding our hearts together through long periods of separation, it had the effect of making us tolerant of each other's yarns — and even convictions. The Lawyer — the best of old fellows — had, because of his many years and many virtues, the only cushion on deck, and was lying on the only rug. The Accountant had brought out already a box of dominoes, and was toying architecturally with the bones. Marlow sat cross-legged right aft, leaning against the mizzen-mast. He had sunken cheeks, a yellow complexion, a straight back, an ascetic aspect, and, with his arms dropped, the palms of hands outwards, resembled an idol. The director, satisfied the anchor had good hold, made his way aft and sat down amongst us. We exchanged a few words lazily. Afterwards there was silence on board the yacht. For some reason or other we did not begin that game of dominoes. We felt meditative, and fit for nothing but placid staring. The day was ending in a serenity of still and exquisite brilliance. The water shone pacifically; the sky, without a speck, was a benign immensity of unstained light; the very mist on the Essex marsh was like a gauzy and radiant fabric, hung from the wooded rises inland, and draping the low shores in diaphanous folds. Only the gloom to the west, brooding over the upper reaches, became more sombre every minute, as if angered by the approach of the sun.

And at last, in its curved and imperceptible fall, the sun sank low, and from glowing white changed to a dull red without rays and without heat, as if about to go out suddenly, stricken to death by the touch of that gloom brooding over a crowd of men.

Forthwith a change came over the waters, and the serenity became less brilliant but more profound. The old river in its broad reach rested unruffled at the decline of day, after ages of good service done to the race that peopled its banks, spread out in the tranquil dignity of a waterway leading to the uttermost

1. A mid-sized sailing boat with two masts.
2. It is high tide.
3. A town, once an important port, about 42 kilometres east of London.

ends of the earth. We looked at the venerable stream not in the vivid flush of a short day that comes and departs for ever, but in the august light of abiding memories. And indeed nothing is easier for a man who has, as the phrase goes, "followed the sea" with reverence and affection, that to evoke the great spirit of the past upon the lower reaches of the Thames. The tidal current runs to and fro in its unceasing service, crowded with memories of men and ships it had borne to the rest of home or to the battles of the sea. It had known and served all the men of whom the nation is proud, from Sir Francis Drake to Sir John Franklin[4], knights all, titled and untitled — the great knights-errant of the sea. It had borne all the ships whose names are like jewels flashing in the night of time, from the *Golden Hind* returning with her rotund flanks full of treasure, to be visited by the Queen's Highness and thus pass out of the gigantic tale, to the *Erebus* and *Terror*, bound on other conquests — and that never returned. It had known the ships and the men. They had sailed from Deptford, from Greenwich, from Erith — the adventurers and the settlers; kings' ships and the ships of men on 'Change[5]; captains, admirals, the dark "interlopers" of the Eastern trade, and the commissioned "generals" of East India fleets. Hunters for gold or pursuers of fame, they all had gone out on that stream, bearing the sword, and often the torch, messengers of the might within the land, bearers of a spark from the sacred fire. What greatness had not floated on the ebb of that river into the mystery of an unknown earth! . . . The dreams of men, the seed of commonwealths, the germs of empires.

The sun set; the dusk fell on the stream, and lights began to appear along the shore. The Chapman light-house, a three-legged thing erect on a mud-flat, shone strongly. Lights of ships moved in the fairway — a great stir of lights going up and going down. And farther west on the upper reaches the place of the monstrous town was still marked ominously on the sky, a brooding gloom in sunshine, a lurid glare under the stars.

"And this also," said Marlow suddenly, "has been one of the dark places of the earth."

He was the only man of us who still "followed the sea." The worst that could be said of him was that he did not represent his class. He was a seaman, but he was a wanderer, too, while most seamen lead, if one may so express it, a sedentary life. Their minds are of the stay-at-home order, and their home is always with them — the ship; and so is their country — the sea. One ship is very much like another, and the sea is always the same. In the immutability of their surroundings the foreign shores, the foreign faces, the changing immensity of life, glide past, veiled not by a sense of mystery but by a slightly disdainful ignorance; for there is nothing mysterious to a seaman unless it be the sea itself, which is the mistress of his existence and as inscrutable as Destiny. For the rest, after his hours of work, a casual stroll or a casual spree on shore suffices to unfold for him the secret of a whole continent, and generally he finds the secret not worth knowing. The yarns of seamen have a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut. But Marlow was not typical (if his propensity to spin yarns be excepted), and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine.

His remark did not seem at all surprising. It was just like Marlow. It was accepted in silence. No one took the trouble to grunt even; and presently he said, very slow —

"I was thinking of very old times, when the Romans first came here, nineteen hundred years ago — the other day. . . . Light came out of this river since — you say Knights? Yes; but it is like a running blaze on a plain, like a flash of lightning in the clouds. We live in the flicker — may it last as long as the old earth keeps rolling! But darkness was here yesterday. Imagine the feelings of a commander of a fine —

4. Drake was a famous sea captain, the first English sailor to circumnavigate the earth, and, in 1588, a commander who helped repel the Spanish Armada, attempting to invade Britain. Franklin was a naval officer who, in 1845, explored the Arctic. The *Golden Hind* was Drake's ship; the *Erebus* and *Terror*, Franklin's.

5. The Royal Exchange in London, where businessmen met to plan business ventures.

what d'ye call 'em? — trireme[6] in the Mediterranean, ordered suddenly to the north; run overland across the Gauls[7] in a hurry; put in charge of one of these craft the legionaries — a wonderful lot of handy men they must have been, too — used to build, apparently by the hundred, in a month or two, if we may believe what we read. Imagine him here — the very end of the world, a sea the colour of lead, a sky the colour of smoke, a kind of ship about as rigid as a concertina — and going up this river with stores, or orders, or what you like. Sand-banks, marshes, forests, savages, — precious little to eat fit for a civilized man, nothing but Thames water to drink. No Falernian[8] wine here, no going ashore. Here and there a military camp lost in a wilderness, like a needle in a bundle of hay — cold, fog, tempests, disease, exile, and death — death skulking in the air, in the water, in the bush. They must have been dying like flies here. Oh, yes — he did it. Did it very well, too, no doubt, and without thinking much about it either, except afterwards to brag of what he had gone through in his time, perhaps. They were men enough to face the darkness. And perhaps he was cheered by keeping his eye on a chance of promotion to the fleet at Ravenna[9] by and by, if he had good friends in Rome and survived the awful climate. Or think of a decent young citizen in a toga — perhaps too much dice, you know — coming out here in the train of some prefect, or tax-gatherer, or trader even, to mend his fortunes. Land in a swamp, march through the woods, and in some inland post feel the savagery, the utter savagery, had closed round him — all that mysterious life of the wilderness that stirs in the forest, in the jungles, in the hearts of wild men. There's no initiation either into such mysteries. He has to live in the midst of the incomprehensible, which is also detestable. And it has a fascination, too, that goes to work upon him. The fascination of the abomination — you know, imagine the growing regrets, the longing to escape, the powerless disgust, the surrender, the hate."

He paused.

"Mind," he began again, lifting one arm from the elbow, the palm of the hand outwards, so that, with his legs folded before him, he had the pose of a Buddha[10] preaching in European clothes and without a lotus-flower — "Mind, none of us would feel exactly like this. What saves us is efficiency — the devotion to efficiency. But these chaps were not much account, really. They were no colonists; their administration was merely a squeeze, and nothing more, I suspect. They were conquerors, and for that you want only brute force — nothing to boast of, when you have it, since your strength is just an accident arising from the weakness of others. They grabbed what they could get for the sake of what was to be got. It was just robbery with violence, aggravated murder on a great scale, and men going at it blind — as is very proper for those who tackle a darkness. The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea — something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to. . . ."

He broke off. Flames glided in the river, small green flames, red flames, white flames, pursuing, overtaking, joining, crossing each other — then separating slowly or hastily. The traffic of the great city went on in the deepening night upon the sleepless river. We looked on, waiting patiently — there was nothing else to do till the end of the flood; but it was only after a long silence, when he said, in a hesitating voice, "I suppose you fellows remember I did once turn fresh-water sailor for a bit," that we knew we were fated, before the ebb began to run, to hear about one of Marlow's inconclusive experiences.

6. Ancient battleship named for the three sets of oars that propelled it.
7. Modern-day France.
8. The finest wine of ancient Rome came from grapes grown on Mount Falernus.
9. Roman naval base.
10. Buddha means "enlightened one." Marlow is compared to a Buddha several times throughout the story.

"I don't want to bother you much with what happened to me personally," he began, showing in this remark the weakness of many tellers of tales who seem so often unaware of what their audience would like best to hear; "yet to understand the effect of it on me you ought to know how I got out there, what I saw, how I went up that river to the place where I first met the poor chap. It was the farthest point of navigation and the culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me — and into my thoughts. It was sombre enough, too — and pitiful — not extraordinary in any way — not very clear either. No, not very clear. And yet it seemed to throw a kind of light.

"I had then, as you remember, just returned to London after a lot of Indian Ocean, Pacific, China Seas — a regular dose of the East — six years or so, and I was loafing about, hindering you fellows in your work and invading your homes, just as though I had got a heavenly mission to civilize you. It was very fine for a time, but after a bit I did get tired of resting. Then I began to look for a ship — I should think the hardest work on earth. But the ships wouldn't even look at me. And I got tired of that game, too.

"Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say, 'When I grow up I will go there.' The North Pole was one of these places, I remember. Well, I haven't been there yet, and shall not try now. The glamour's off. Other places were scattered about the hemispheres. I have been in some of them, and . . . well, we won't talk about that. But there was one yet — the biggest, the most blank, so to speak — that I had a hankering after.

"True, by this time it was not a blank space any more. It had got filled since my boyhood with rivers and lakes and names. It had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery — a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness. But there was in it one river[11] especially, a mighty big river, that you could see on the map, resembling an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land. And as I looked at the map of it in a shop-window, it fascinated me as a snake would a bird — a silly little bird. Then I remembered there was a big concern, a Company for trade on that river. Dash it all! I thought to myself, they can't trade without using some kind of craft on that lot of fresh water — steamboats! Why shouldn't I try to get charge of one? I went on along Fleet Street, but could not shake off the idea. The snake had charmed me.

"You understand it was a Continental concern, that Trading society; but I have a lot of relations living on the Continent, because it's cheap and not so nasty as it looks, they say.

"I am sorry to own I began to worry them. This was already a fresh departure for me. I was not used to get things that way, you know. I always went my own road and on my own legs where I had a mind to go. I wouldn't have believed it of myself; but, then — you see — I felt somehow I must get there by hook or by crook. So I worried them. The men said 'My dear fellow,' and did nothing. Then — would you believe it? — I tried the women. I, Charlie Marlow, set the women to work — to get a job. Heavens! Well, you see, the notion drove me. I had an aunt, a dear enthusiastic soul. She wrote: 'It will be delightful. I am ready to do anything, anything for you. It is a glorious idea. I know the wife of a very high personage in the Administration, and also a man who has lots of influence with,' etc. She was determined to make no end of fuss to get me appointed skipper of a river steamboat, if such was my fancy.

"I got my appointment — of course; and I got it very quick. It appears the Company had received

11. The Congo River, one of the world's largest, runs through the Democratic Republic of the Congo and empties into the South Atlantic Ocean.

news that one of their captains had been killed in a scuffle with the natives. This was my chance, and it made me the more anxious to go. It was only months and months afterwards, when I made the attempt to recover what was left of the body, that I heard the original quarrel arose from a misunderstanding about some hens. Yes, two black hens. Fresleven — that was the fellow's name, a Dane — thought himself wronged somehow in the bargain, so he went ashore and started to hammer the chief of the village with a stick. Oh, it didn't surprise me in the least to hear this, and at the same time to be told that Fresleven was the gentlest, quietest creature that ever walked on two legs. No doubt he was; but he had been a couple of years already out there engaged in the noble cause, you know, and he probably felt the need at last of asserting his self-respect in some way. Therefore he whacked the old nigger mercilessly, while a big crowd of his people watched him, thunderstruck, till some man — I was told the chief's son — in desperation at hearing the old chap yell, made a tentative jab with a spear at the white man — and of course it went quite easy between the shoulder-blades. Then the whole population cleared into the forest, expecting all kinds of calamities to happen, while, on the other hand, the steamer Fresleven commanded left also in a bad panic, in charge of the engineer, I believe. Afterwards nobody seemed to trouble much about Fresleven's remains, till I got out and stepped into his shoes. I couldn't let it rest, though; but when an opportunity offered at last to meet my predecessor, the grass growing through his ribs was tall enough to hide his bones. They were all there. The supernatural being had not been touched after he fell. And the village was deserted, the huts gaped black, rotting, all askew within the fallen enclosures. A calamity had come to it, sure enough. The people had vanished. Mad terror had scattered them, men, women, and children, through the bush, and they had never returned. What became of the hens I don't know either. I should think the cause of progress got them, anyhow. However, through this glorious affair I got my appointment, before I had fairly begun to hope for it.

"I flew around like mad to get ready, and before forty-eight hours I was crossing the Channel to show myself to my employers, and sign the contract. In a very few hours I arrived in a city that always makes me think of a whited sepulchre[12]. Prejudice no doubt. I had no difficulty in finding the Company's offices. It was the biggest thing in the town, and everybody I met was full of it. They were going to run an over-sea empire, and make no end of coin by trade.

"A narrow and deserted street in deep shadow, high houses, innumerable windows with venetian blinds, a dead silence, grass sprouting right and left, immense double doors standing ponderously ajar. I slipped through one of these cracks, went up a swept and ungarnished staircase, as arid as a desert, and opened the first door I came to. Two women[13], one fat and the other slim, sat on straw-bottomed chairs, knitting black wool. The slim one got up and walked straight at me — still knitting with down-cast eyes — and only just as I began to think of getting out of her way, as you would for a somnambulist, stood still, and looked up. Her dress was as plain as an umbrella-cover, and she turned round without a word and preceded me into a waiting-room. I gave my name, and looked about. Deal table in the middle, plain chairs all round the walls, on one end a large shining map, marked with all the colours of a rainbow. There was a vast amount of red[14] — good to see at any time, because one knows that some real work is done in there, a deuce of a lot of blue, a little green, smears of orange, and, on the East Coast, a purple patch, to show where the jolly pioneers of progress drink the jolly lager-beer. However, I wasn't going into any of these. I was going into the yellow. Dead in the centre. And the river was there — fascinating — deadly — like a snake. Ough! A door opened, a white-haired secretarial head, but wearing a compassionate expression, appeared, and a skinny forefinger beckoned me into the sanctuary.

12. Brussels, the capital of Belgium, the colonial power in control of the Congo in 1890, when Conrad worked for the Belgian company taking ivory out of Africa.

13. In several myths and in Milton's *Paradise Lost,* two sinister women guard the entrance to an Underworld.

14. Representing territory controlled by Great Britain. Yellow is for Belgian-controlled regions. The other colours represent other European colonial powers.

Its light was dim, and a heavy writing-desk squatted in the middle. From behind that structure came out an impression of pale plumpness in a frock-coat. The great man himself. He was five feet six, I should judge, and had his grip on the handle-end of ever so many millions. He shook hands, I fancy, murmured vaguely, was satisfied with my French. BON VOYAGE.

"In about forty-five seconds I found myself again in the waiting-room with the compassionate secretary, who, full of desolation and sympathy, made me sign some document. I believe I undertook amongst other things not to disclose any trade secrets. Well, I am not going to.

"I began to feel slightly uneasy. You know I am not used to such ceremonies, and there was something ominous in the atmosphere. It was just as though I had been let into some conspiracy — I don't know — something not quite right; and I was glad to get out. In the outer room the two women knitted black wool feverishly. People were arriving, and the younger one was walking back and forth introducing them. The old one sat on her chair. Her flat cloth slippers were propped up on a foot-warmer, and a cat reposed on her lap. She wore a starched white affair on her head, had a wart on one cheek, and silver-rimmed spectacles hung on the tip of her nose. She glanced at me above the glasses. The swift and indifferent placidity of that look troubled me. Two youths with foolish and cheery countenances were being piloted over, and she threw at them the same quick glance of unconcerned wisdom. She seemed to know all about them and about me, too. An eerie feeling came over me. She seemed uncanny and fateful. Often far away there I thought of these two, guarding the door of Darkness, knitting black wool as for a warm pall, one introducing, introducing continuously to the unknown, the other scrutinizing the cheery and foolish faces with unconcerned old eyes. AVE! Old knitter of black wool. MORITURI TE SALUTANT[15]. Not many of those she looked at ever saw her again — not half, by a long way.

"There was yet a visit to the doctor. 'A simple formality,' assured me the secretary, with an air of taking an immense part in all my sorrows. Accordingly a young chap wearing his hat over the left eyebrow, some clerk I suppose — there must have been clerks in the business, though the house was as still as a house in a city of the dead — came from somewhere up-stairs, and led me forth. He was shabby and careless, with inkstains on the sleeves of his jacket, and his cravat was large and billowy, under a chin shaped like the toe of an old boot. It was a little too early for the doctor, so I proposed a drink, and thereupon he developed a vein of joviality. As we sat over our vermouths he glorified the Company's business, and by and by I expressed casually my surprise at him not going out there. He became very cool and collected all at once. 'I am not such a fool as I look, quoth Plato to his disciples,' he said sententiously, emptied his glass with great resolution, and we rose.

"The old doctor felt my pulse, evidently thinking of something else the while. 'Good, good for there,' he mumbled, and then with a certain eagerness asked me whether I would let him measure my head[16]. Rather surprised, I said Yes, when he produced a thing like calipers and got the dimensions back and front and every way, taking notes carefully. He was an unshaven little man in a threadbare coat like a gaberdine, with his feet in slippers, and I thought him a harmless fool. 'I always ask leave, in the interests of science, to measure the crania of those going out there,' he said. 'And when they come back, too?' I asked. 'Oh, I never see them,' he remarked; 'and, moreover, the changes take place inside, you know.' He smiled, as if at some quiet joke. 'So you are going out there. Famous. Interesting, too.' He gave me a searching glance, and made another note. 'Ever any madness in your family?' he asked, in a matter-of-fact tone. I felt very annoyed. 'Is that question in the interests of science, too?' 'It would be,' he said, without taking notice of my irritation, 'interesting for science to watch the mental changes of individuals, on the spot, but . . .' 'Are you an alienist?' I interrupted. 'Every doctor should be — a little,'

15. Those about to die salute you, ostensibly shouted by gladiators to their Roman emperor, as the gladiators entered the arena, ready for the fight.
16. Based upon late-19th century belief that personality and temperament, even intelligence, could be ascertained by measuring various parts of the head.

answered that original, imperturbably. 'I have a little theory which you messieurs who go out there must help me to prove. This is my share in the advantages my country shall reap from the possession of such a magnificent dependency. The mere wealth I leave to others. Pardon my questions, but you are the first Englishman coming under my observation . . .' I hastened to assure him I was not in the least typical. 'If I were,' said I, 'I wouldn't be talking like this with you.' 'What you say is rather profound, and probably erroneous,' he said, with a laugh. 'Avoid irritation more than exposure to the sun. Adieu. How do you English say, eh? Good-bye. Ah! Good-bye. Adieu. In the tropics one must before everything keep calm.' . . . He lifted a warning forefinger. . . . 'DU CALME, DU CALME. ADIEU.'

"One thing more remained to do — say good-bye to my excellent aunt. I found her triumphant. I had a cup of tea — the last decent cup of tea for many days — and in a room that most soothingly looked just as you would expect a lady's drawing-room to look, we had a long quiet chat by the fireside. In the course of these confidences it became quite plain to me I had been represented to the wife of the high dignitary, and goodness knows to how many more people besides, as an exceptional and gifted creature — a piece of good fortune for the Company — a man you don't get hold of every day. Good heavens! and I was going to take charge of a two-penny-half-penny river-steamboat with a penny whistle attached! It appeared, however, I was also one of the Workers, with a capital — you know. Something like an emissary of light, something like a lower sort of apostle. There had been a lot of such rot let loose in print and talk just about that time, and the excellent woman, living right in the rush of all that humbug, got carried off her feet. She talked about 'weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways,' till, upon my word, she made me quite uncomfortable. I ventured to hint that the Company was run for profit.

"'You forget, dear Charlie, that the labourer is worthy of his hire,' she said, brightly. It's queer how out of touch with truth women are. They live in a world of their own, and there has never been anything like it, and never can be. It is too beautiful altogether, and if they were to set it up it would go to pieces before the first sunset. Some confounded fact we men have been living contentedly with ever since the day of creation would start up and knock the whole thing over.

"After this I got embraced, told to wear flannel, be sure to write often, and so on — and I left. In the street — I don't know why — a queer feeling came to me that I was an imposter. Odd thing that I, who used to clear out for any part of the world at twenty-four hours' notice, with less thought than most men give to the crossing of a street, had a moment — I won't say of hesitation, but of startled pause, before this commonplace affair. The best way I can explain it to you is by saying that, for a second or two, I felt as though, instead of going to the centre of a continent, I were about to set off for the centre of the earth.

"I left in a French steamer, and she called in every blamed port they have out there, for, as far as I could see, the sole purpose of landing soldiers and custom-house officers. I watched the coast. Watching a coast as it slips by the ship is like thinking about an enigma. There it is before you — smiling, frowning, inviting, grand, mean, insipid, or savage, and always mute with an air of whispering, 'Come and find out.' This one was almost featureless, as if still in the making, with an aspect of monotonous grimness. The edge of a colossal jungle, so dark-green as to be almost black, fringed with white surf, ran straight, like a ruled line, far, far away along a blue sea whose glitter was blurred by a creeping mist. The sun was fierce, the land seemed to glisten and drip with steam. Here and there greyish-whitish specks showed up clustered inside the white surf, with a flag flying above them perhaps. Settlements some centuries old, and still no bigger than pinheads on the untouched expanse of their background. We pounded along, stopped, landed soldiers; went on, landed custom-house clerks to levy toll in what looked like a God-forsaken wilderness, with a tin shed and a flag-pole lost in it; landed more soldiers — to take care of the custom-house clerks, presumably. Some, I heard, got drowned in the surf; but whether they did or not, nobody seemed particularly to care. They were just flung out there, and on we went. Every day the coast looked the same, as though we had not moved; but we passed various places — trading places — with names like Gran' Bassam, Little Popo; names that seemed to belong to some

sordid farce acted in front of a sinister back-cloth. The idleness of a passenger, my isolation amongst all these men with whom I had no point of contact, the oily and languid sea, the uniform sombreness of the coast, seemed to keep me away from the truth of things, within the toil of a mournful and senseless delusion. The voice of the surf heard now and then was a positive pleasure, like the speech of a brother. It was something natural, that had its reason, that had a meaning. Now and then a boat from the shore gave one a momentary contact with reality. It was paddled by black fellows. You could see from afar the white of their eyeballs glistening. They shouted, sang; their bodies streamed with perspiration; they had faces like grotesque masks — these chaps; but they had bone, muscle, a wild vitality, an intense energy of movement, that was as natural and true as the surf along their coast. They wanted no excuse for being there. They were a great comfort to look at. For a time I would feel I belonged still to a world of straightforward facts; but the feeling would not last long. Something would turn up to scare it away. Once, I remember, we came upon a man-of-war anchored off the coast. There wasn't even a shed there, and she was shelling the bush. It appears the French had one of their wars[17] going on thereabouts. Her ensign dropped limp like a rag; the muzzles of the long six-inch guns stuck out all over the low hull; the greasy, slimy swell swung her up lazily and let her down, swaying her thin masts. In the empty immensity of earth, sky, and water, there she was, incomprehensible, firing into a continent. Pop, would go one of the six-inch guns; a small flame would dart and vanish, a little white smoke would disappear, a tiny projectile would give a feeble screech — and nothing happened. Nothing could happen. There was a touch of insanity in the proceeding, a sense of lugubrious drollery in the sight; and it was not dissipated by somebody on board assuring me earnestly there was a camp of natives — he called them enemies! — hidden out of sight somewhere.

"We gave her her letters (I heard the men in that lonely ship were dying of fever at the rate of three a day) and went on. We called at some more places with farcical names, where the merry dance of death and trade goes on in a still and earthy atmosphere as of an overheated catacomb; all along the formless coast bordered by dangerous surf, as if Nature herself had tried to ward off intruders; in and out of rivers, streams of death in life, whose banks were rotting into mud, whose waters, thickened into slime, invaded the contorted mangroves, that seemed to writhe at us in the extremity of an impotent despair. Nowhere did we stop long enough to get a particularized impression, but the general sense of vague and oppressive wonder grew upon me. It was like a weary pilgrimage amongst hints for nightmares.

"It was upward of thirty days before I saw the mouth of the big river. We anchored off the seat of the government[18]. But my work would not begin till some two hundred miles farther on. So as soon as I could I made a start for a place thirty miles higher up.

"I had my passage on a little sea-going steamer. Her captain was a Swede, and knowing me for a seaman, invited me on the bridge. He was a young man, lean, fair, and morose, with lanky hair and a shuffling gait. As we left the miserable little wharf, he tossed his head contemptuously at the shore. 'Been living there?' he asked. I said, 'Yes.' 'Fine lot these government chaps — are they not?' he went on, speaking English with great precision and considerable bitterness. 'It is funny what some people will do for a few francs a month. I wonder what becomes of that kind when it goes up country?' I said to him I expected to see that soon. 'So-o-o!' he exclaimed. He shuffled athwart, keeping one eye ahead vigilantly. 'Don't be too sure,' he continued. 'The other day I took up a man who hanged himself on the road. He was a Swede, too.' 'Hanged himself! Why, in God's name?' I cried. He kept on looking out watchfully. 'Who knows? The sun too much for him, or the country perhaps.'

"At last we opened a reach. A rocky cliff appeared, mounds of turned-up earth by the shore, houses on a hill, others with iron roofs, amongst a waste of excavations, or hanging to the declivity. A continuous

17. In 1890, France was waging war against the West African Kingdom of Dahomey, which it succeeded in conquering by 1894.
18. The port town of Boma, near the mouth of the Congo River.

noise of the rapids above hovered over this scene of inhabited devastation. A lot of people, mostly black and naked, moved about like ants. A jetty projected into the river. A blinding sunlight drowned all this at times in a sudden recrudescence of glare. 'There's your Company's station,[19]' said the Swede, pointing to three wooden barrack-like structures on the rocky slope. 'I will send your things up. Four boxes did you say? So. Farewell.'

"I came upon a boiler wallowing in the grass, then found a path leading up the hill. It turned aside for the boulders, and also for an undersized railway-truck lying there on its back with its wheels in the air. One was off. The thing looked as dead as the carcass of some animal. I came upon more pieces of decaying machinery, a stack of rusty rails. To the left a clump of trees made a shady spot, where dark things seemed to stir feebly. I blinked, the path was steep. A horn tooted to the right, and I saw the black people run. A heavy and dull detonation shook the ground, a puff of smoke came out of the cliff, and that was all. No change appeared on the face of the rock. They were building a railway. The cliff was not in the way or anything; but this objectless blasting was all the work going on.

"A slight clinking behind me made me turn my head. Six black men advanced in a file, toiling up the path. They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads, and the clink kept time with their footsteps. Black rags were wound round their loins, and the short ends behind waggled to and fro like tails. I could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope; each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking. Another report from the cliff made me think suddenly of that ship of war I had seen firing into a continent. It was the same kind of ominous voice; but these men could by no stretch of imagination be called enemies. They were called criminals, and the outraged law, like the bursting shells, had come to them, an insoluble mystery from the sea. All their meagre breasts panted together, the violently dilated nostrils quivered, the eyes stared stonily uphill. They passed me within six inches, without a glance, with that complete, deathlike indifference of unhappy savages. Behind this raw matter one of the reclaimed, the product of the new forces at work, strolled despondently, carrying a rifle by its middle. He had a uniform jacket with one button off, and seeing a white man on the path, hoisted his weapon to his shoulder with alacrity. This was simple prudence, white men being so much alike at a distance that he could not tell who I might be. He was speedily reassured, and with a large, white, rascally grin, and a glance at his charge, seemed to take me into partnership in his exalted trust. After all, I also was a part of the great cause of these high and just proceedings.

"Instead of going up, I turned and descended to the left. My idea was to let that chain-gang get out of sight before I climbed the hill. You know I am not particularly tender; I've had to strike and to fend off. I've had to resist and to attack sometimes — that's only one way of resisting — without counting the exact cost, according to the demands of such sort of life as I had blundered into. I've seen the devil of violence, and the devil of greed, and the devil of hot desire; but, by all the stars! these were strong, lusty, red-eyed devils, that swayed and drove men — men, I tell you. But as I stood on this hillside, I foresaw that in the blinding sunshine of that land I would become acquainted with a flabby, pretending, weak-eyed devil of a rapacious and pitiless folly. How insidious he could be, too, I was only to find out several months later and a thousand miles farther. For a moment I stood appalled, as though by a warning. Finally I descended the hill, obliquely, towards the trees I had seen.

"I avoided a vast artificial hole somebody had been digging on the slope, the purpose of which I found it impossible to divine. It wasn't a quarry or a sandpit, anyhow. It was just a hole. It might have been connected with the philanthropic desire of giving the criminals something to do. I don't know. Then I nearly fell into a very narrow ravine, almost no more than a scar in the hillside. I discovered that a lot of imported drainage-pipes for the settlement had been tumbled in there. There wasn't one that was

19. Marlow is now in the town of Matadi, about 70 kilometres upriver from Boma.

not broken. It was a wanton smash-up. At last I got under the trees. My purpose was to stroll into the shade for a moment; but no sooner within than it seemed to me I had stepped into the gloomy circle of some Inferno[20]. The rapids were near, and an uninterrupted, uniform, headlong, rushing noise filled the mournful stillness of the grove, where not a breath stirred, not a leaf moved, with a mysterious sound — as though the tearing pace of the launched earth had suddenly become audible.

"Black shapes crouched, lay, sat between the trees leaning against the trunks, clinging to the earth, half coming out, half effaced within the dim light, in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment, and despair. Another mine on the cliff went off, followed by a slight shudder of the soil under my feet. The work was going on. The work! And this was the place where some of the helpers had withdrawn to die.

"They were dying slowly — it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now — nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom. Brought from all the recesses of the coast in all the legality of time contracts, lost in uncongenial surroundings, fed on unfamiliar food, they sickened, became inefficient, and were then allowed to crawl away and rest. These moribund shapes were free as air — and nearly as thin. I began to distinguish the gleam of the eyes under the trees. Then, glancing down, I saw a face near my hand. The black bones reclined at full length with one shoulder against the tree, and slowly the eyelids rose and the sunken eyes looked up at me, enormous and vacant, a kind of blind, white flicker in the depths of the orbs, which died out slowly. The man seemed young — almost a boy — but you know with them it's hard to tell. I found nothing else to do but to offer him one of my good Swede's ship's biscuits I had in my pocket. The fingers closed slowly on it and held — there was no other movement and no other glance. He had tied a bit of white worsted round his neck — Why? Where did he get it? Was it a badge — an ornament — a charm — a propitiatory act? Was there any idea at all connected with it? It looked startling round his black neck, this bit of white thread from beyond the seas.

"Near the same tree two more bundles of acute angles sat with their legs drawn up. One, with his chin propped on his knees, stared at nothing, in an intolerable and appalling manner: his brother phantom rested its forehead, as if overcome with a great weariness; and all about others were scattered in every pose of contorted collapse, as in some picture of a massacre or a pestilence. While I stood horror-struck, one of these creatures rose to his hands and knees, and went off on all-fours towards the river to drink. He lapped out of his hand, then sat up in the sunlight, crossing his shins in front of him, and after a time let his woolly head fall on his breastbone.

"I didn't want any more loitering in the shade, and I made haste towards the station. When near the buildings I met a white man, in such an unexpected elegance of get-up that in the first moment I took him for a sort of vision. I saw a high starched collar, white cuffs, a light alpaca jacket, snowy trousers, a clean necktie, and varnished boots. No hat. Hair parted, brushed, oiled, under a green-lined parasol held in a big white hand. He was amazing, and had a penholder behind his ear.

"I shook hands with this miracle, and I learned he was the Company's chief accountant, and that all the book-keeping was done at this station. He had come out for a moment, he said, 'to get a breath of fresh air.' The expression sounded wonderfully odd, with its suggestion of sedentary desk-life. I wouldn't have mentioned the fellow to you at all, only it was from his lips that I first heard the name of the man who is so indissolubly connected with the memories of that time. Moreover, I respected the fellow. Yes; I respected his collars, his vast cuffs, his brushed hair. His appearance was certainly that of a hairdresser's dummy; but in the great demoralization of the land he kept up his appearance. That's backbone. His starched collars and got-up shirt-fronts were achievements of character. He had been out nearly three years; and, later, I could not help asking him how he managed to sport such linen. He had just the faintest blush, and said modestly, 'I've been teaching one of the native women about the station. It was difficult.

20. A reference to the nine circles of Hell, as described in the "Inferno," the first part of Dante's 14th-century epic poem, *The Divine Comedy*.

She had a distaste for the work.' Thus this man had verily accomplished something. And he was devoted to his books, which were in apple-pie order.

"Everything else in the station was in a muddle — heads, things, buildings. Strings of dusty niggers with splay feet arrived and departed; a stream of manufactured goods, rubbishy cottons, beads, and brass-wire set into the depths of darkness, and in return came a precious trickle of ivory[21].

"I had to wait in the station for ten days — an eternity. I lived in a hut in the yard, but to be out of the chaos I would sometimes get into the accountant's office. It was built of horizontal planks, and so badly put together that, as he bent over his high desk, he was barred from neck to heels with narrow strips of sunlight. There was no need to open the big shutter to see. It was hot there, too; big flies buzzed fiendishly, and did not sting, but stabbed. I sat generally on the floor, while, of faultless appearance (and even slightly scented), perching on a high stool, he wrote, he wrote. Sometimes he stood up for exercise. When a truckle-bed with a sick man (some invalid agent from upcountry) was put in there, he exhibited a gentle annoyance. 'The groans of this sick person,' he said, 'distract my attention. And without that it is extremely difficult to guard against clerical errors in this climate.'

"One day he remarked, without lifting his head, 'In the interior you will no doubt meet Mr. Kurtz.' On my asking who Mr. Kurtz was, he said he was a first-class agent; and seeing my disappointment at this information, he added slowly, laying down his pen, 'He is a very remarkable person.' Further questions elicited from him that Mr. Kurtz was at present in charge of a trading-post, a very important one, in the true ivory-country, at 'the very bottom of there. Sends in as much ivory as all the others put together . . .' He began to write again. The sick man was too ill to groan. The flies buzzed in a great peace.

"Suddenly there was a growing murmur of voices and a great tramping of feet. A caravan had come in. A violent babble of uncouth sounds burst out on the other side of the planks. All the carriers were speaking together, and in the midst of the uproar the lamentable voice of the chief agent was heard 'giving it up' tearfully for the twentieth time that day. . . . He rose slowly. 'What a frightful row,' he said. He crossed the room gently to look at the sick man, and returning, said to me, 'He does not hear.' 'What! Dead?' I asked, startled. 'No, not yet,' he answered, with great composure. Then, alluding with a toss of the head to the tumult in the station-yard, 'When one has got to make correct entries, one comes to hate those savages — hate them to the death.' He remained thoughtful for a moment. 'When you see Mr. Kurtz' he went on, 'tell him from me that everything here' — he glanced at the deck — 'is very satisfactory. I don't like to write to him — with those messengers of ours you never know who may get hold of your letter — at that Central Station.' He stared at me for a moment with his mild, bulging eyes. 'Oh, he will go far, very far,' he began again. 'He will be a somebody in the Administration before long. They, above — the Council in Europe, you know — mean him to be.'

"He turned to his work. The noise outside had ceased, and presently in going out I stopped at the door. In the steady buzz of flies the homeward-bound agent was lying finished and insensible; the other, bent over his books, was making correct entries of perfectly correct transactions; and fifty feet below the doorstep I could see the still tree-tops of the grove of death.

"Next day I left that station at last, with a caravan of sixty men, for a two-hundred-mile tramp.

"No use telling you much about that. Paths, paths, everywhere; a stamped-in network of paths spreading over the empty land, through the long grass, through burnt grass, through thickets, down and up chilly ravines, up and down stony hills ablaze with heat; and a solitude, a solitude, nobody, not a hut. The population had cleared out a long time ago. Well, if a lot of mysterious niggers armed with all kinds of fearful weapons suddenly took to travelling on the road between Deal and Gravesend[22], catching the yokels right and left to carry heavy loads for them, I fancy every farm and cottage thereabouts would

21. Highly valued in Europe, the main reason for Belgium's presence in Africa, the raw material for the manufacture of precious jewelry and ornate, expensive trinkets, including chess pieces and billiard balls.

22. Towns in Kent County, England.

get empty very soon. Only here the dwellings were gone, too. Still I passed through several abandoned villages. There's something pathetically childish in the ruins of grass walls. Day after day, with the stamp and shuffle of sixty pair of bare feet behind me, each pair under a 60-lb. load. Camp, cook, sleep, strike camp, march. Now and then a carrier dead in harness, at rest in the long grass near the path, with an empty water-gourd and his long staff lying by his side. A great silence around and above. Perhaps on some quiet night the tremor of far-off drums, sinking, swelling, a tremor vast, faint; a sound weird, appealing, suggestive, and wild — and perhaps with as profound a meaning as the sound of bells in a Christian country. Once a white man in an unbuttoned uniform, camping on the path with an armed escort of lank Zanzibaris, very hospitable and festive — not to say drunk. Was looking after the upkeep of the road, he declared. Can't say I saw any road or any upkeep, unless the body of a middle-aged negro, with a bullet-hole in the forehead, upon which I absolutely stumbled three miles farther on, may be considered as a permanent improvement. I had a white companion, too, not a bad chap, but rather too fleshy and with the exasperating habit of fainting on the hot hillsides, miles away from the least bit of shade and water. Annoying, you know, to hold your own coat like a parasol over a man's head while he is coming to. I couldn't help asking him once what he meant by coming there at all. 'To make money, of course. What do you think?' he said, scornfully. Then he got fever, and had to be carried in a hammock slung under a pole. As he weighed sixteen stone I had no end of rows with the carriers. They jibbed, ran away, sneaked off with their loads in the night — quite a mutiny. So, one evening, I made a speech in English with gestures, not one of which was lost to the sixty pairs of eyes before me, and the next morning I started the hammock off in front all right. An hour afterwards I came upon the whole concern wrecked in a bush — man, hammock, groans, blankets, horrors. The heavy pole had skinned his poor nose. He was very anxious for me to kill somebody, but there wasn't the shadow of a carrier near. I remembered the old doctor — 'It would be interesting for science to watch the mental changes of individuals, on the spot.' I felt I was becoming scientifically interesting. However, all that is to no purpose. On the fifteenth day I came in sight of the big river again, and hobbled into the Central Station[23]. It was on a back water surrounded by scrub and forest, with a pretty border of smelly mud on one side, and on the three others enclosed by a crazy fence of rushes. A neglected gap was all the gate it had, and the first glance at the place was enough to let you see the flabby devil was running that show. White men with long staves in their hands appeared languidly from amongst the buildings, strolling up to take a look at me, and then retired out of sight somewhere. One of them, a stout, excitable chap with black moustaches, informed me with great volubility and many digressions, as soon as I told him who I was, that my steamer was at the bottom of the river. I was thunderstruck. What, how, why? Oh, it was 'all right.' The 'manager himself' was there. All quite correct. 'Everybody had behaved splendidly! splendidly!' — 'you must,' he said in agitation, 'go and see the general manager at once. He is waiting!'

"I did not see the real significance of that wreck at once. I fancy I see it now, but I am not sure — not at all. Certainly the affair was too stupid — when I think of it — to be altogether natural[24]. Still . . . But at the moment it presented itself simply as a confounded nuisance. The steamer was sunk. They had started two days before in a sudden hurry up the river with the manager on board, in charge of some volunteer skipper, and before they had been out three hours they tore the bottom out of her on stones, and she sank near the south bank. I asked myself what I was to do there, now my boat was lost. As a matter of fact, I had plenty to do in fishing my command out of the river. I had to set about it the very next day. That, and the repairs when I brought the pieces to the station, took some months.

"My first interview with the manager was curious. He did not ask me to sit down after my twenty-mile walk that morning. He was commonplace in complexion, in features, in manners, and in voice. He

23. In Kinshasa, then a trading post, now a city of nine million and the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

24. Meaning here is somewhat obscure, although it is likely that the steamer was sunk to delay Marlow's rescue of Kurtz, so Kurtz could send out more ivory or die, allowing another ambitious agent to take his place.

was of middle size and of ordinary build. His eyes, of the usual blue, were perhaps remarkably cold, and he certainly could make his glance fall on one as trenchant and heavy as an axe. But even at these times the rest of his person seemed to disclaim the intention. Otherwise there was only an indefinable, faint expression of his lips, something stealthy — a smile — not a smile — I remember it, but I can't explain. It was unconscious, this smile was, though just after he had said something it got intensified for an instant. It came at the end of his speeches like a seal applied on the words to make the meaning of the commonest phrase appear absolutely inscrutable. He was a common trader, from his youth up employed in these parts — nothing more. He was obeyed, yet he inspired neither love nor fear, nor even respect. He inspired uneasiness. That was it! Uneasiness. Not a definite mistrust — just uneasiness — nothing more. You have no idea how effective such a . . . a. . . . faculty can be. He had no genius for organizing, for initiative, or for order even. That was evident in such things as the deplorable state of the station. He had no learning, and no intelligence. His position had come to him — why? Perhaps because he was never ill . . . He had served three terms of three years out there . . . Because triumphant health in the general rout of constitutions is a kind of power in itself. When he went home on leave he rioted on a large scale — pompously. Jack ashore[25] — with a difference — in externals only. This one could gather from his casual talk. He originated nothing, he could keep the routine going — that's all. But he was great. He was great by this little thing that it was impossible to tell what could control such a man. He never gave that secret away. Perhaps there was nothing within him. Such a suspicion made one pause — for out there there were no external checks. Once when various tropical diseases had laid low almost every 'agent' in the station, he was heard to say, 'Men who come out here should have no entrails.' He sealed the utterance with that smile of his, as though it had been a door opening into a darkness he had in his keeping. You fancied you had seen things — but the seal was on. When annoyed at meal-times by the constant quarrels of the white men about precedence, he ordered an immense round table to be made, for which a special house had to be built. This was the station's mess-room. Where he sat was the first place — the rest were nowhere. One felt this to be his unalterable conviction. He was neither civil nor uncivil. He was quiet. He allowed his 'boy' — an overfed young negro from the coast — to treat the white men, under his very eyes, with provoking insolence.

"He began to speak as soon as he saw me. I had been very long on the road. He could not wait. Had to start without me. The up-river stations had to be relieved. There had been so many delays already that he did not know who was dead and who was alive, and how they got on — and so on, and so on. He paid no attention to my explanations, and, playing with a stick of sealing-wax, repeated several times that the situation was 'very grave, very grave.' There were rumours that a very important station was in jeopardy, and its chief, Mr. Kurtz, was ill. Hoped it was not true. Mr. Kurtz was . . . I felt weary and irritable. Hang Kurtz, I thought. I interrupted him by saying I had heard of Mr. Kurtz on the coast. 'Ah! So they talk of him down there,' he murmured to himself. Then he began again, assuring me Mr. Kurtz was the best agent he had, an exceptional man, of the greatest importance to the Company; therefore I could understand his anxiety. He was, he said, 'very, very uneasy.' Certainly he fidgeted on his chair a good deal, exclaimed, 'Ah, Mr. Kurtz!' broke the stick of sealing-wax and seemed dumfounded by the accident. Next thing he wanted to know 'how long it would take to' . . . I interrupted him again. Being hungry, you know, and kept on my feet too. I was getting savage. 'How can I tell?' I said. 'I haven't even seen the wreck yet — some months, no doubt.' All this talk seemed to me so futile. 'Some months,' he said. 'Well, let us say three months before we can make a start. Yes. That ought to do the affair.' I flung out of his hut (he lived all alone in a clay hut with a sort of verandah) muttering to myself my opinion of him. He was a chattering idiot. Afterwards I took it back when it was borne in upon me startlingly with what extreme nicety he had estimated the time requisite for the 'affair.'

25. Slang for a British sailor on shore leave, usually misbehaving.

"I went to work the next day, turning, so to speak, my back on that station. In that way only it seemed to me I could keep my hold on the redeeming facts of life. Still, one must look about sometimes; and then I saw this station, these men strolling aimlessly about in the sunshine of the yard. I asked myself sometimes what it all meant. They wandered here and there with their absurd long staves in their hands, like a lot of faithless pilgrims bewitched inside a rotten fence. The word 'ivory' rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it. A taint of imbecile rapacity blew through it all, like a whiff from some corpse. By Jove! I've never seen anything so unreal in my life. And outside, the silent wilderness surrounding this cleared speck on the earth struck me as something great and invincible, like evil or truth, waiting patiently for the passing away of this fantastic invasion.

"Oh, these months! Well, never mind. Various things happened. One evening a grass shed full of calico, cotton prints, beads, and I don't know what else, burst into a blaze so suddenly that you would have thought the earth had opened to let an avenging fire consume all that trash. I was smoking my pipe quietly by my dismantled steamer, and saw them all cutting capers in the light, with their arms lifted high, when the stout man with moustaches came tearing down to the river, a tin pail in his hand, assured me that everybody was 'behaving splendidly, splendidly,' dipped about a quart of water and tore back again. I noticed there was a hole in the bottom of his pail.

"I strolled up. There was no hurry. You see the thing had gone off like a box of matches. It had been hopeless from the very first. The flame had leaped high, driven everybody back, lighted up everything — and collapsed. The shed was already a heap of embers glowing fiercely. A nigger was being beaten near by. They said he had caused the fire in some way; be that as it may, he was screeching most horribly. I saw him, later, for several days, sitting in a bit of shade looking very sick and trying to recover himself; afterwards he arose and went out — and the wilderness without a sound took him into its bosom again. As I approached the glow from the dark I found myself at the back of two men, talking. I heard the name of Kurtz pronounced, then the words, 'take ad-vantage of this unfortunate accident.' One of the men was the manager. I wished him a good evening. 'Did you ever see anything like it — eh? it is incredible,' he said, and walked off. The other man remained. He was a first-class agent, young, gentlemanly, a bit reserved, with a forked little beard and a hooked nose. He was stand-offish with the other agents, and they on their side said he was the manager's spy upon them. As to me, I had hardly ever spoken to him before. We got into talk, and by and by we strolled away from the hissing ruins. Then he asked me to his room, which was in the main building of the station. He struck a match, and I perceived that this young aristocrat had not only a silver-mounted dressing-case but also a whole candle all to himself. Just at that time the manager was the only man supposed to have any right to candles. Native mats covered the clay walls; a collection of spears, assegais[26], shields, knives was hung up in trophies. The business intrusted to this fellow was the making of bricks — so I had been informed; but there wasn't a fragment of a brick anywhere in the station, and he had been there more than a year — waiting. It seems he could not make bricks without something, I don't know what — straw maybe. Anyway, it could not be found there and as it was not likely to be sent from Europe, it did not appear clear to me what he was waiting for. An act of special creation perhaps. However, they were all waiting — all the sixteen or twenty pilgrims of them — for something; and upon my word it did not seem an un-congenial occupation, from the way they took it, though the only thing that ever came to them was disease — as far as I could see. They beguiled the time by back-biting and intriguing against each other in a foolish kind of way. There was an air of plotting about that station, but nothing came of it, of course. It was as unreal as everything else — as the philanthropic pretence of the whole concern, as their talk, as their government, as their show of work. The only real feeling was a desire to get appointed to a trading-post where ivory was to be had, so that they could earn percentages. They intrigued and slandered and hated each other only on that account —

26. A slender, wooden spear.

but as to effectually lifting a little finger — oh, no. By heavens! there is something after all in the world allowing one man to steal a horse while another must not look at a halter. Steal a horse straight out. Very well. He has done it. Perhaps he can ride. But there is a way of looking at a halter that would provoke the most charitable of saints into a kick.

"I had no idea why he wanted to be sociable, but as we chatted in there it suddenly occurred to me the fellow was trying to get at something — in fact, pumping me. He alluded constantly to Europe, to the people I was supposed to know there — putting leading questions as to my acquaintances in the sepulchral city, and so on. His little eyes glittered like mica discs — with curiosity — though he tried to keep up a bit of superciliousness. At first I was astonished, but very soon I became awfully curious to see what he would find out from me. I couldn't possibly imagine what I had in me to make it worth his while. It was very pretty to see how he baffled himself, for in truth my body was full only of chills, and my head had nothing in it but that wretched steamboat business. It was evident he took me for a perfectly shameless prevaricator. At last he got angry, and, to conceal a movement of furious annoyance, he yawned. I rose. Then I noticed a small sketch in oils, on a panel, representing a woman, draped and blindfolded, carrying a lighted torch.[27] The background was sombre — almost black. The movement of the woman was stately, and the effect of the torchlight on the face was sinister.

"It arrested me, and he stood by civilly, holding an empty half-pint champagne bottle (medical comforts) with the candle stuck in it. To my question he said Mr. Kurtz had painted this — in this very station more than a year ago — while waiting for means to go to his trading post. 'Tell me, pray,' said I, 'who is this Mr. Kurtz?'

"'The chief of the Inner Station,' he answered in a short tone, looking away. 'Much obliged,' I said, laughing. 'And you are the brickmaker of the Central Station. Every one knows that.' He was silent for a while. 'He is a prodigy,' he said at last. 'He is an emissary of pity and science and progress, and devil knows what else. We want,' he began to declaim suddenly, 'for the guidance of the cause intrusted to us by Europe, so to speak, higher intelligence, wide sympathies, a singleness of purpose.' 'Who says that?' I asked. 'Lots of them,' he replied. 'Some even write that; and so HE comes here, a special being, as you ought to know.' 'Why ought I to know?' I interrupted, really surprised. He paid no attention. 'Yes. To-day he is chief of the best station, next year he will be assistant-manager, two years more and . . . but I dare-say you know what he will be in two years' time. You are of the new gang — the gang of virtue. The same people who sent him specially also recommended you. Oh, don't say no. I've my own eyes to trust.' Light dawned upon me. My dear aunt's influential acquaintances were producing an unexpected effect upon that young man. I nearly burst into a laugh. 'Do you read the Company's confidential correspondence?' I asked. He hadn't a word to say. It was great fun. 'When Mr. Kurtz,' I continued, severely, 'is General Manager, you won't have the opportunity.'

"He blew the candle out suddenly, and we went outside. The moon had risen. Black figures strolled about listlessly, pouring water on the glow, whence proceeded a sound of hissing; steam ascended in the moonlight, the beaten nigger groaned somewhere. 'What a row the brute makes!' said the indefatigable man with the moustaches, appearing near us. 'Serve him right. Transgression — punishment — bang! Pitiless, pitiless. That's the only way. This will prevent all conflagrations for the future. I was just telling the manager . . .' He noticed my companion, and became crestfallen all at once. 'Not in bed yet,' he said, with a kind of servile heartiness; 'it's so natural. Ha! Danger — agitation.' He vanished. I went on to the river-side, and the other followed me. I heard a scathing murmur at my ear, 'Heap of muffs — go to.' The pilgrims could be seen in knots gesticulating, discussing. Several had still their staves in their hands. I verily believe they took these sticks to bed with them. Beyond the fence the forest stood up spectrally

27. One of the story's important symbols, representing, among other possibilities, Europe's presence in Africa, pretending to bring the light of civilization, but in reality, blind to the exploitation, which comes in the wake of European colonialism.

in the moonlight, and through that dim stir, through the faint sounds of that lamentable courtyard, the silence of the land went home to one's very heart — its mystery, its greatness, the amazing reality of its concealed life. The hurt nigger moaned feebly somewhere near by, and then fetched a deep sigh that made me mend my pace away from there. I felt a hand introducing itself under my arm. 'My dear sir,' said the fellow, 'I don't want to be misunderstood, and especially by you, who will see Mr. Kurtz long before I can have that pleasure. I wouldn't like him to get a false idea of my disposition. . . .'

"I let him run on, this papier-mache Mephistopheles,[28] and it seemed to me that if I tried I could poke my fore-finger through him, and would find nothing inside but a little loose dirt, maybe. He, don't you see, had been planning to be assistant-manager by and by under the present man, and I could see that the coming of that Kurtz had upset them both not a little. He talked precipitately, and I did not try to stop him. I had my shoulders against the wreck of my steamer, hauled up on the slope like a carcass of some big river animal. The smell of mud, of primeval mud, by Jove! was in my nostrils, the high stillness of primeval forest was before my eyes; there were shiny patches on the black creek. The moon had spread over everything a thin layer of silver — over the rank grass, over the mud, upon the wall of matted vegetation standing higher than the wall of a temple, over the great river I could see through a sombre gap glittering, glittering, as it flowed broadly by without a murmur. All this was great, expectant, mute, while the man jabbered about himself. I wondered whether the stillness on the face of the immensity looking at us two were meant as an appeal or as a menace. What were we who had strayed in here? Could we handle that dumb thing, or would it handle us? I felt how big, how confoundedly big, was that thing that couldn't talk, and perhaps was deaf as well. What was in there? I could see a little ivory coming out from there, and I had heard Mr. Kurtz was in there. I had heard enough about it, too — God knows! Yet somehow it didn't bring any image with it — no more than if I had been told an angel or a fiend was in there. I believed it in the same way one of you might believe there are inhabitants in the planet Mars. I knew once a Scotch sailmaker who was certain, dead sure, there were people in Mars. If you asked him for some idea how they looked and behaved, he would get shy and mutter something about 'walking on all-fours.' If you as much as smiled, he would — though a man of sixty — offer to fight you. I would not have gone so far as to fight for Kurtz, but I went for him near enough to a lie. You know I hate, detest, and can't bear a lie, not because I am straighter than the rest of us, but simply because it appals me. There is a taint of death, a flavour of mortality in lies — which is exactly what I hate and detest in the world — what I want to forget. It makes me miserable and sick, like biting something rotten would do. Temperament, I suppose. Well, I went near enough to it by letting the young fool there believe anything he liked to imagine as to my influence in Europe. I became in an instant as much of a pretence as the rest of the bewitched pilgrims. This simply because I had a notion it somehow would be of help to that Kurtz whom at the time I did not see — you understand. He was just a word for me. I did not see the man in the name any more than you do. Do you see him? Do you see the story? Do you see anything? It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream — making a vain attempt, because no relation of a dream can convey the dream-sensation, that commingling of absurdity, surprise, and bewilderment in a tremor of struggling revolt, that notion of being captured by the incredible which is of the very essence of dreams. . . ."

He was silent for a while.

". . . No, it is impossible; it is impossible to convey the life-sensation of any given epoch of one's existence — that which makes its truth, its meaning — its subtle and penetrating essence. It is impossible. We live, as we dream — alone. . . ."

He paused again as if reflecting, then added:

28. The devil's emissary in the various stories about Faust, the German scholar who sold his soul to the devil in exchange for supreme knowledge and worldly goods. The satanic nature of European imperialism in Africa is referenced often throughout the story.

“Of course in this you fellows see more than I could then. You see me, whom you know. . . .”

It had become so pitch dark that we listeners could hardly see one another. For a long time already he, sitting apart, had been no more to us than a voice. There was not a word from anybody. The others might have been asleep, but I was awake. I listened, I listened on the watch for the sentence, for the word, that would give me the clue to the faint uneasiness inspired by this narrative that seemed to shape itself without human lips in the heavy night-air of the river.

“. . . Yes — I let him run on,” Marlow began again, “and think what he pleased about the powers that were behind me. I did! And there was nothing behind me! There was nothing but that wretched, old, mangled steamboat I was leaning against, while he talked fluently about ‘the necessity for every man to get on.’ ‘And when one comes out here, you conceive, it is not to gaze at the moon.’ Mr. Kurtz was a ‘universal genius,’ but even a genius would find it easier to work with ‘adequate tools — intelligent men.’ He did not make bricks — why, there was a physical impossibility in the way — as I was well aware; and if he did secretarial work for the manager, it was because ‘no sensible man rejects wantonly the confidence of his superiors.’ Did I see it? I saw it. What more did I want? What I really wanted was rivets, by heaven! Rivets. To get on with the work — to stop the hole. Rivets I wanted. There were cases of them down at the coast — cases — piled up — burst — split! You kicked a loose rivet at every second step in that station-yard on the hillside. Rivets had rolled into the grove of death. You could fill your pockets with rivets for the trouble of stooping down — and there wasn’t one rivet to be found where it was wanted. We had plates that would do, but nothing to fasten them with. And every week the messenger, a long negro, letter-bag on shoulder and staff in hand, left our station for the coast. And several times a week a coast caravan came in with trade goods — ghastly glazed calico that made you shudder only to look at it, glass beads value about a penny a quart, confounded spotted cotton handkerchiefs. And no rivets. Three carriers could have brought all that was wanted to set that steamboat afloat.

“He was becoming confidential now, but I fancy my unresponsive attitude must have exasperated him at last, for he judged it necessary to inform me he feared neither God nor devil, let alone any mere man. I said I could see that very well, but what I wanted was a certain quantity of rivets — and rivets were what really Mr. Kurtz wanted, if he had only known it. Now letters went to the coast every week. . . . ‘My dear sir,’ he cried, ‘I write from dictation.’ I demanded rivets. There was a way — for an intelligent man. He changed his manner; became very cold, and suddenly began to talk about a hippopotamus; wondered whether sleeping on board the steamer (I stuck to my salvage night and day) I wasn’t disturbed. There was an old hippo that had the bad habit of getting out on the bank and roaming at night over the station grounds. The pilgrims used to turn out in a body and empty every rifle they could lay hands on at him. Some even had sat up o’ nights for him. All this energy was wasted, though. ‘That animal has a charmed life,’ he said; ‘but you can say this only of brutes in this country. No man — you apprehend me? — no man here bears a charmed life.’ He stood there for a moment in the moonlight with his delicate hooked nose set a little askew, and his mica eyes glittering without a wink, then, with a curt Good-night, he strode off. I could see he was disturbed and considerably puzzled, which made me feel more hopeful than I had been for days. It was a great comfort to turn from that chap to my influential friend, the battered, twisted, ruined, tin-pot steamboat. I clambered on board. She rang under my feet like an empty Huntley & Palmer biscuit-tin kicked along a gutter; she was nothing so solid in make, and rather less pretty in shape, but I had expended enough hard work on her to make me love her. No influential friend would have served me better. She had given me a chance to come out a bit — to find out what I could do. No, I don’t like work. I had rather laze about and think of all the fine things that can be done. I don’t like work — no man does — but I like what is in the work — the chance to find yourself. Your own reality — for yourself, not for others — what no other man can ever know. They can only see the mere show, and never can tell what it really means.

"I was not surprised to see somebody sitting aft, on the deck, with his legs dangling over the mud. You see I rather chummed with the few mechanics there were in that station, whom the other pilgrims naturally despised — on account of their imperfect manners, I suppose. This was the foreman — a boiler-maker by trade — a good worker. He was a lank, bony, yellow-faced man, with big intense eyes. His aspect was worried, and his head was as bald as the palm of my hand; but his hair in falling seemed to have stuck to his chin, and had prospered in the new locality, for his beard hung down to his waist. He was a widower with six young children (he had left them in charge of a sister of his to come out there), and the passion of his life was pigeon-flying. He was an enthusiast and a connoisseur. He would rave about pigeons. After work hours he used sometimes to come over from his hut for a talk about his children and his pigeons; at work, when he had to crawl in the mud under the bottom of the steamboat, he would tie up that beard of his in a kind of white serviette he brought for the purpose. It had loops to go over his ears. In the evening he could be seen squatted on the bank rinsing that wrapper in the creek with great care, then spreading it solemnly on a bush to dry.

"I slapped him on the back and shouted, 'We shall have rivets!' He scrambled to his feet exclaiming, 'No! Rivets!' as though he couldn't believe his ears. Then in a low voice, 'You . . . eh?' I don't know why we behaved like lunatics. I put my finger to the side of my nose and nodded mysteriously. 'Good for you!' he cried, snapped his fingers above his head, lifting one foot. I tried a jig. We capered on the iron deck. A frightful clatter came out of that hulk, and the virgin forest on the other bank of the creek sent it back in a thundering roll upon the sleeping station. It must have made some of the pilgrims sit up in their hovels. A dark figure obscured the lighted doorway of the manager's hut, vanished, then, a second or so after, the doorway itself vanished, too. We stopped, and the silence driven away by the stamping of our feet flowed back again from the recesses of the land. The great wall of vegetation, an exuberant and entangled mass of trunks, branches, leaves, boughs, festoons, motionless in the moonlight, was like a rioting invasion of soundless life, a rolling wave of plants, piled up, crested, ready to topple over the creek, to sweep every little man of us out of his little existence. And it moved not. A deadened burst of mighty splashes and snorts reached us from afar, as though an icthyosaurus[29] had been taking a bath of glitter in the great river. 'After all,' said the boiler-maker in a reasonable tone, 'why shouldn't we get the rivets?' Why not, indeed! I did not know of any reason why we shouldn't. 'They'll come in three weeks,' I said confidently.

"But they didn't. Instead of rivets there came an invasion, an infliction, a visitation. It came in sections during the next three weeks, each section headed by a donkey carrying a white man in new clothes and tan shoes, bowing from that elevation right and left to the impressed pilgrims. A quarrelsome band of footsore sulky niggers trod on the heels of the donkey; a lot of tents, camp-stools, tin boxes, white cases, brown bales would be shot down in the court-yard, and the air of mystery would deepen a little over the muddle of the station. Five such instalments came, with their absurd air of disorderly flight with the loot of innumerable outfit shops and provision stores, that, one would think, they were lugging, after a raid, into the wilderness for equitable division. It was an inextricable mess of things decent in themselves but that human folly made look like the spoils of thieving.

"This devoted band called itself the Eldorado Exploring Expedition, and I believe they were sworn to secrecy. Their talk, however, was the talk of sordid buccaneers: it was reckless without hardihood, greedy without audacity, and cruel without courage; there was not an atom of fore-sight or of serious intention in the whole batch of them, and they did not seem aware these things are wanted for the work of the world. To tear treasure out of the bowels of the land was their desire, with no more moral purpose at the back of it than there is in burglars breaking into a safe. Who paid the expenses of the noble enterprise I don't know; but the uncle of our manager was leader of that lot.

29. A prehistoric marine reptile, ancestor of the dolphin.

"In exterior he resembled a butcher in a poor neighbourhood, and his eyes had a look of sleepy cunning. He carried his fat paunch with ostentation on his short legs, and during the time his gang infested the station spoke to no one but his nephew. You could see these two roaming about all day long with their heads close together in an everlasting confab.

"I had given up worrying myself about the rivets. One's capacity for that kind of folly is more limited than you would suppose. I said Hang! — and let things slide. I had plenty of time for meditation, and now and then I would give some thought to Kurtz. I wasn't very interested in him. No. Still, I was curious to see whether this man, who had come out equipped with moral ideas of some sort, would climb to the top after all and how he would set about his work when there."

91.

Heart of Darkness: Chapter 2

Joseph Conrad

"One evening as I was lying flat on the deck of my steamboat, I heard voices approaching — and there were the nephew and the uncle strolling along the bank. I laid my head on my arm again, and had nearly lost myself in a doze, when somebody said in my ear, as it were: 'I am as harmless as a little child, but I don't like to be dictated to. Am I the manager — or am I not? I was ordered to send him there. It's incredible.' . . . I became aware that the two were standing on the shore alongside the forepart of the steamboat, just below my head. I did not move; it did not occur to me to move: I was sleepy. 'It IS unpleasant,' grunted the uncle. 'He has asked the Administration to be sent there,' said the other, 'with the idea of showing what he could do; and I was instructed accordingly. Look at the influence that man must have. Is it not frightful?' They both agreed it was frightful, then made several bizarre remarks: 'Make rain and fine weather — one man — the Council — by the nose' — bits of absurd sentences that got the better of my drowsiness, so that I had pretty near the whole of my wits about me when the uncle said, 'The climate may do away with this difficulty for you. Is he alone there?' 'Yes,' answered the manager; 'he sent his assistant down the river with a note to me in these terms: "Clear this poor devil out of the country, and don't bother sending more of that sort. I had rather be alone than have the kind of men you can dispose of with me." It was more than a year ago. Can you imagine such impudence!' 'Anything since then?' asked the other hoarsely. 'Ivory,' jerked the nephew; 'lots of it — prime sort — lots — most annoying, from him.' 'And with that?' questioned the heavy rumble. 'Invoice,' was the reply fired out, so to speak. Then silence. They had been talking about Kurtz.

"I was broad awake by this time, but, lying perfectly at ease, remained still, having no inducement to change my position. 'How did that ivory come all this way?' growled the elder man, who seemed very vexed. The other explained that it had come with a fleet of canoes in charge of an English half-caste clerk Kurtz had with him; that Kurtz had apparently intended to return himself, the station being by that time bare of goods and stores, but after coming three hundred miles, had suddenly decided to go back, which he started to do alone in a small dugout with four paddlers, leaving the half-caste to continue down the river with the ivory. The two fellows there seemed astounded at anybody attempting such a thing. They were at a loss for an adequate motive. As to me, I seemed to see Kurtz for the first time. It was a distinct glimpse: the dugout, four paddling savages, and the lone white man turning his back suddenly on the headquarters, on relief, on thoughts of home — perhaps; setting his face towards the depths of the wilderness, towards his empty and desolate station. I did not know the motive. Perhaps he was just simply a fine fellow who stuck to his work for its own sake. His name, you understand, had not been pronounced once. He was 'that man.' The half-caste, who, as far as I could see, had conducted a difficult trip with great prudence and pluck, was invariably alluded to as 'that scoundrel.' The 'scoundrel' had reported that the 'man' had been very ill — had recovered imperfectly. . . . The two below me moved away then a few paces, and strolled back and forth at some little distance. I heard: 'Military post — doctor — two hundred miles — quite alone now — unavoidable delays — nine months — no news — strange rumours.' They approached again, just as the manager was saying, 'No one, as far as I know, unless a species of wandering trader — a pestilential fellow, snapping ivory from the natives.' Who was

it they were talking about now? I gathered in snatches that this was some man supposed to be in Kurtz's district, and of whom the manager did not approve. 'We will not be free from unfair competition till one of these fellows is hanged for an example,' he said. 'Certainly,' grunted the other; 'get him hanged! Why not? Anything — anything can be done in this country. That's what I say; nobody here, you understand, HERE, can endanger your position. And why? You stand the climate — you outlast them all. The danger is in Europe; but there before I left I took care to — ' They moved off and whispered, then their voices rose again. 'The extraordinary series of delays is not my fault. I did my best.' The fat man sighed. 'Very sad.' 'And the pestiferous absurdity of his talk,' continued the other; 'he bothered me enough when he was here. "Each station should be like a beacon on the road towards better things, a centre for trade of course, but also for humanizing, improving, instructing." Conceive you — that ass! And he wants to be manager! No, it's — ' Here he got choked by excessive indignation, and I lifted my head the least bit. I was surprised to see how near they were — right under me. I could have spat upon their hats. They were looking on the ground, absorbed in thought. The manager was switching his leg with a slender twig: his sagacious relative lifted his head. 'You have been well since you came out this time?' he asked. The other gave a start. 'Who? I? Oh! Like a charm — like a charm. But the rest — oh, my goodness! All sick. They die so quick, too, that I haven't the time to send them out of the country — it's incredible!' 'Hm'm. Just so,' grunted the uncle. 'Ah! my boy, trust to this — I say, trust to this.' I saw him extend his short flipper of an arm for a gesture that took in the forest, the creek, the mud, the river — seemed to beckon with a dishonouring flourish before the sunlit face of the land a treacherous appeal to the lurking death, to the hidden evil, to the profound darkness of its heart. It was so startling that I leaped to my feet and looked back at the edge of the forest, as though I had expected an answer of some sort to that black display of confidence. You know the foolish notions that come to one sometimes. The high stillness confronted these two figures with its ominous patience, waiting for the passing away of a fantastic invasion.

"They swore aloud together — out of sheer fright, I believe — then pretending not to know anything of my existence, turned back to the station. The sun was low; and leaning forward side by side, they seemed to be tugging painfully uphill their two ridiculous shadows of unequal length, that trailed behind them slowly over the tall grass without bending a single blade.

"In a few days the Eldorado Expedition went into the patient wilderness, that closed upon it as the sea closes over a diver. Long afterwards the news came that all the donkeys were dead. I know nothing as to the fate of the less valuable animals. They, no doubt, like the rest of us, found what they deserved. I did not inquire. I was then rather excited at the prospect of meeting Kurtz very soon. When I say very soon I mean it comparatively. It was just two months from the day we left the creek when we came to the bank below Kurtz's station.

"Going up that river was like traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings. An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest. The air was warm, thick, heavy, sluggish. There was no joy in the brilliance of sunshine. The long stretches of the water-way ran on, deserted, into the gloom of over-shadowed distances. On silvery sand-banks hippos and alligators[1] sunned themselves side by side. The broadening waters flowed through a mob of wooded islands; you lost your way on that river as you would in a desert, and butted all day long against shoals, trying to find the channel, till you thought yourself bewitched and cut off for ever from everything you had known once — somewhere — far away — in another existence perhaps. There were moments when one's past came back to one, as it will sometimes when you have not a moment to spare for yourself; but it came in the shape of an unrestful and noisy dream, remembered with wonder amongst the overwhelming realities of this strange world of plants, and water, and silence. And this stillness of life did not in the least resemble a peace. It was the stillness of an implacable force brooding over an

1. Marlow mistakes alligators for crocodiles.

inscrutable intention. It looked at you with a vengeful aspect. I got used to it afterwards; I did not see it any more; I had no time. I had to keep guessing at the channel; I had to discern, mostly by inspiration, the signs of hidden banks; I watched for sunken stones; I was learning to clap my teeth smartly before my heart flew out, when I shaved by a fluke some infernal sly old snag that would have ripped the life out of the tin-pot steamboat and drowned all the pilgrims; I had to keep a lookout for the signs of dead wood we could cut up in the night for next day's steaming. When you have to attend to things of that sort, to the mere incidents of the surface, the reality — the reality, I tell you — fades. The inner truth is hidden — luckily, luckily. But I felt it all the same; I felt often its mysterious stillness watching me at my monkey tricks, just as it watches you fellows performing on your respective tight-ropes for — what is it? half-a-crown a tumble[2] — "

"Try to be civil, Marlow," growled a voice, and I knew there was at least one listener awake besides myself.

"I beg your pardon. I forgot the heartache which makes up the rest of the price. And indeed what does the price matter, if the trick be well done? You do your tricks very well. And I didn't do badly either, since I managed not to sink that steamboat on my first trip. It's a wonder to me yet. Imagine a blindfolded man set to drive a van over a bad road. I sweated and shivered over that business considerably, I can tell you. After all, for a seaman, to scrape the bottom of the thing that's supposed to float all the time under his care is the unpardonable sin. No one may know of it, but you never forget the thump — eh? A blow on the very heart. You remember it, you dream of it, you wake up at night and think of it — years after — and go hot and cold all over. I don't pretend to say that steamboat floated all the time. More than once she had to wade for a bit, with twenty cannibals splashing around and pushing. We had enlisted some of these chaps on the way for a crew. Fine fellows — cannibals — in their place. They were men one could work with, and I am grateful to them. And, after all, they did not eat each other before my face: they had brought along a provision of hippo-meat which went rotten, and made the mystery of the wilderness stink in my nostrils. Phoo! I can sniff it now. I had the manager on board and three or four pilgrims with their staves — all complete. Sometimes we came upon a station close by the bank, clinging to the skirts of the unknown, and the white men rushing out of a tumble-down hovel, with great gestures of joy and surprise and welcome, seemed very strange — had the appearance of being held there captive by a spell. The word ivory would ring in the air for a while — and on we went again into the silence, along empty reaches, round the still bends, between the high walls of our winding way, reverberating in hollow claps the ponderous beat of the stern-wheel. Trees, trees, millions of trees, massive, immense, running up high; and at their foot, hugging the bank against the stream, crept the little begrimed steamboat, like a sluggish beetle crawling on the floor of a lofty portico. It made you feel very small, very lost, and yet it was not altogether depressing, that feeling. After all, if you were small, the grimy beetle crawled on — which was just what you wanted it to do. Where the pilgrims imagined it crawled to I don't know. To some place where they expected to get something. I bet! For me it crawled towards Kurtz — exclusively; but when the steam-pipes started leaking we crawled very slow. The reaches opened before us and closed behind, as if the forest had stepped leisurely across the water to bar the way for our return. We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness. It was very quiet there. At night sometimes the roll of drums behind the curtain of trees would run up the river and remain sustained faintly, as if hovering in the air high over our heads, till the first break of day. Whether it meant war, peace, or prayer we could not tell. The dawns were heralded by the descent of a chill stillness; the wood-cutters slept, their fires burned low; the snapping of a twig would make you start. We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet. We could have fancied ourselves the first of men taking possession of an accursed inheritance, to be subdued at the cost of profound anguish and of

2. Then the cost for the services of a prostitute.

excessive toil. But suddenly, as we struggled round a bend, there would be a glimpse of rush walls, of peaked grass-roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling, under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage. The steamer toiled along slowly on the edge of a black and incomprehensible frenzy. The pre-historic man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us — who could tell? We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wondering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse. We could not understand because we were too far and could not remember because we were travelling in the night of first ages, of those ages that are gone, leaving hardly a sign — and no memories.

"The earth seemed unearthly. We are accustomed to look upon the shackled form of a conquered monster, but there — there you could look at a thing monstrous and free. It was unearthly, and the men were — No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it — this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity — like yours — the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough; but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you — you so remote from the night of first ages — could comprehend. And why not? The mind of man is capable of anything — because everything is in it, all the past as well as all the future. What was there after all? Joy, fear, sorrow, devotion, valour, rage — who can tell? — but truth — truth stripped of its cloak of time. Let the fool gape and shudder — the man knows, and can look on without a wink. But he must at least be as much of a man as these on the shore. He must meet that truth with his own true stuff — with his own in-born strength. Principles won't do. Acquisitions, clothes, pretty rags — rags that would fly off at the first good shake. No; you want a deliberate belief. An appeal to me in this fiendish row — is there? Very well; I hear; I admit, but I have a voice, too, and for good or evil mine is the speech that cannot be silenced. Of course, a fool, what with sheer fright and fine sentiments, is always safe. Who's that grunting? You wonder I didn't go ashore for a howl and a dance? Well, no — I didn't. Fine sentiments, you say? Fine sentiments, be hanged! I had no time. I had to mess about with white-lead and strips of woolen blanket helping to put bandages on those leaky steam-pipes — I tell you. I had to watch the steering, and circumvent those snags, and get the tin-pot along by hook or by crook. There was surface-truth enough in these things to save a wiser man. And between whiles I had to look after the savage who was fireman. He was an improved specimen; he could fire up a vertical boiler. He was there below me, and, upon my word, to look at him was as edifying as seeing a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather hat, walking on his hind-legs. A few months of training had done for that really fine chap. He squinted at the steam-gauge and at the water-gauge with an evident effort of intrepidity — and he had filed teeth, too, the poor devil, and the wool of his pate shaved into queer patterns, and three ornamental scars[3] on each of his cheeks. He ought to have been clapping his hands and stamping his feet on the bank, instead of which he was hard at work, a thrall to strange witchcraft, full of improving knowledge. He was useful because he had been instructed; and what he knew was this — that should the water in that transparent thing disappear, the evil spirit inside the boiler would get angry through the greatness of his thirst, and take a terrible vengeance. So he sweated and fired up and watched the glass fearfully (with an impromptu charm, made of rags, tied to his arm, and a piece of polished bone, as big as a watch, stuck flatways through his lower lip), while the wooded banks slipped past us slowly, the short noise was left behind, the interminable miles of silence — and we crept on, towards Kurtz. But the snags were thick,

3. Teeth were sometimes filed to indicate a boy's transition to adulthood; decorative scars often indicated tribal affiliation.

the water was treacherous and shallow, the boiler seemed indeed to have a sulky devil in it, and thus neither that fireman nor I had any time to peer into our creepy thoughts.

"Some fifty miles below the Inner Station we came upon a hut of reeds, an inclined and melancholy pole, with the unrecognizable tatters of what had been a flag of some sort flying from it, and a neatly stacked wood-pile. This was unexpected. We came to the bank, and on the stack of firewood found a flat piece of board with some faded pencil-writing on it. When deciphered it said: 'Wood for you. Hurry up. Approach cautiously.' There was a signature, but it was illegible — not Kurtz — a much longer word. 'Hurry up.' Where? Up the river? 'Approach cautiously.' We had not done so. But the warning could not have been meant for the place where it could be only found after approach. Something was wrong above. But what — and how much? That was the question. We commented adversely upon the imbecility of that telegraphic style. The bush around said nothing, and would not let us look very far, either. A torn curtain of red twill hung in the doorway of the hut, and flapped sadly in our faces. The dwelling was dismantled; but we could see a white man had lived there not very long ago. There remained a rude table — a plank on two posts; a heap of rubbish reposed in a dark corner, and by the door I picked up a book. It had lost its covers, and the pages had been thumbed into a state of extremely dirty softness; but the back had been lovingly stitched afresh with white cotton thread, which looked clean yet. It was an extraordinary find. Its title was, AN INQUIRY INTO SOME POINTS OF SEAMANSHIP, by a man Towser, Towson — some such name — Master in his Majesty's Navy. The matter looked dreary reading enough, with illustrative diagrams and repulsive tables of figures, and the copy was sixty years old. I handled this amazing antiquity with the greatest possible tenderness, lest it should dissolve in my hands. Within, Towson or Towser was inquiring earnestly into the breaking strain of ships' chains and tackle, and other such matters. Not a very enthralling book; but at the first glance you could see there a singleness of intention, an honest concern for the right way of going to work, which made these humble pages, thought out so many years ago, luminous with another than a professional light. The simple old sailor, with his talk of chains and purchases, made me forget the jungle and the pilgrims in a delicious sensation of having come upon something unmistakably real. Such a book being there was wonderful enough; but still more astounding were the notes pencilled in the margin, and plainly referring to the text. I couldn't believe my eyes! They were in cipher! Yes, it looked like cipher. Fancy a man lugging with him a book of that description into this nowhere and studying it — and making notes — in cipher at that! It was an extravagant mystery.

"I had been dimly aware for some time of a worrying noise, and when I lifted my eyes I saw the wood-pile was gone, and the manager, aided by all the pilgrims, was shouting at me from the riverside. I slipped the book into my pocket. I assure you to leave off reading was like tearing myself away from the shelter of an old and solid friendship.

"I started the lame engine ahead. 'It must be this miserable trader-this intruder,' exclaimed the manager, looking back malevolently at the place we had left. 'He must be English,' I said. 'It will not save him from getting into trouble if he is not careful,' muttered the manager darkly. I observed with assumed innocence that no man was safe from trouble in this world.

"The current was more rapid now, the steamer seemed at her last gasp, the stern-wheel flopped languidly, and I caught myself listening on tiptoe for the next beat of the float,[4] for in sober truth I expected the wretched thing to give up every moment. It was like watching the last flickers of a life. But still we crawled. Sometimes I would pick out a tree a little way ahead to measure our progress towards Kurtz by, but I lost it invariably before we got abreast. To keep the eyes so long on one thing was too much for human patience. The manager displayed a beautiful resignation. I fretted and fumed and took to arguing with myself whether or no I would talk openly with Kurtz; but before I could come to any

4. The regulator that opens and closes a water-supply valve.

conclusion it occurred to me that my speech or my silence, indeed any action of mine, would be a mere futility. What did it matter what any one knew or ignored? What did it matter who was manager? One gets sometimes such a flash of insight. The essentials of this affair lay deep under the surface, beyond my reach, and beyond my power of meddling.

"Towards the evening of the second day we judged ourselves about eight miles from Kurtz's station. I wanted to push on; but the manager looked grave, and told me the navigation up there was so dangerous that it would be advisable, the sun being very low already, to wait where we were till next morning. Moreover, he pointed out that if the warning to approach cautiously were to be followed, we must approach in daylight — not at dusk or in the dark. This was sensible enough. Eight miles meant nearly three hours' steaming for us, and I could also see suspicious ripples at the upper end of the reach. Nevertheless, I was annoyed beyond expression at the delay, and most unreasonably, too, since one night more could not matter much after so many months. As we had plenty of wood, and caution was the word, I brought up in the middle of the stream. The reach was narrow, straight, with high sides like a railway cutting. The dusk came gliding into it long before the sun had set. The current ran smooth and swift, but a dumb immobility sat on the banks. The living trees, lashed together by the creepers and every living bush of the undergrowth, might have been changed into stone, even to the slenderest twig, to the lightest leaf. It was not sleep — it seemed unnatural, like a state of trance. Not the faintest sound of any kind could be heard. You looked on amazed, and began to suspect yourself of being deaf — then the night came suddenly, and struck you blind as well. About three in the morning some large fish leaped, and the loud splash made me jump as though a gun had been fired. When the sun rose there was a white fog, very warm and clammy, and more blinding than the night. It did not shift or drive; it was just there, standing all round you like something solid. At eight or nine, perhaps, it lifted as a shutter lifts. We had a glimpse of the towering multitude of trees, of the immense matted jungle, with the blazing little ball of the sun hanging over it — all perfectly still — and then the white shutter came down again, smoothly, as if sliding in greased grooves. I ordered the chain, which we had begun to heave in, to be paid out again. Before it stopped running with a muffled rattle, a cry, a very loud cry, as of infinite desolation, soared slowly in the opaque air. It ceased. A complaining clamour, modulated in savage discords, filled our ears. The sheer unexpectedness of it made my hair stir under my cap. I don't know how it struck the others: to me it seemed as though the mist itself had screamed, so suddenly, and apparently from all sides at once, did this tumultuous and mournful uproar arise. It culminated in a hurried outbreak of almost intolerably excessive shrieking, which stopped short, leaving us stiffened in a variety of silly attitudes, and obstinately listening to the nearly as appalling and excessive silence. 'Good God! What is the meaning — ' stammered at my elbow one of the pilgrims — a little fat man, with sandy hair and red whiskers, who wore sidespring[5] boots, and pink pyjamas tucked into his socks. Two others remained open-mouthed a while minute, then dashed into the little cabin, to rush out incontinently and stand darting scared glances, with Winchesters[6] at 'ready' in their hands. What we could see was just the steamer we were on, her outlines blurred as though she had been on the point of dissolving, and a misty strip of water, perhaps two feet broad, around her — and that was all. The rest of the world was nowhere, as far as our eyes and ears were concerned. Just nowhere. Gone, disappeared; swept off without leaving a whisper or a shadow behind.

"I went forward, and ordered the chain to be hauled in short, so as to be ready to trip the anchor and move the steamboat at once if necessary. 'Will they attack?' whispered an awed voice. 'We will be all butchered in this fog,' murmured another. The faces twitched with the strain, the hands trembled slightly, the eyes forgot to wink. It was very curious to see the contrast of expressions of the white

5. With elastic down the sides to make it easier to slip them on and off.
6. A lever-action repeating rifle.

men and of the black fellows of our crew, who were as much strangers to that part of the river as we, though their homes were only eight hundred miles away. The whites, of course greatly discomposed, had besides a curious look of being painfully shocked by such an outrageous row. The others had an alert, naturally interested expression; but their faces were essentially quiet, even those of the one or two who grinned as they hauled at the chain. Several exchanged short, grunting phrases, which seemed to settle the matter to their satisfaction. Their headman, a young, broad-chested black, severely draped in dark-blue fringed cloths, with fierce nostrils and his hair all done up artfully in oily ringlets, stood near me. 'Aha!' I said, just for good fellowship's sake. 'Catch 'im,' he snapped, with a bloodshot widening of his eyes and a flash of sharp teeth — 'catch 'im. Give 'im to us.' 'To you, eh?' I asked; 'what would you do with them?' 'Eat 'im!' he said curtly, and, leaning his elbow on the rail, looked out into the fog in a dignified and profoundly pensive attitude. I would no doubt have been properly horrified, had it not occurred to me that he and his chaps must be very hungry: that they must have been growing increasingly hungry for at least this month past. They had been engaged for six months (I don't think a single one of them had any clear idea of time, as we at the end of countless ages have. They still belonged to the beginnings of time — had no inherited experience to teach them as it were), and of course, as long as there was a piece of paper written over in accordance with some farcical law or other made down the river, it didn't enter anybody's head to trouble how they would live. Certainly they had brought with them some rotten hippo-meat, which couldn't have lasted very long, anyway, even if the pilgrims hadn't, in the midst of a shocking hullabaloo, thrown a considerable quantity of it over-board. It looked like a high-handed proceeding; but it was really a case of legitimate self-defence. You can't breathe dead hippo waking, sleeping, and eating, and at the same time keep your precarious grip on existence. Besides that, they had given them every week three pieces of brass wire,[7] each about nine inches long; and the theory was they were to buy their provisions with that currency in riverside villages. You can see how THAT worked. There were either no villages, or the people were hostile, or the director, who like the rest of us fed out of tins, with an occasional old he-goat thrown in, didn't want to stop the steamer for some more or less recondite reason. So, unless they swallowed the wire itself, or made loops of it to snare the fishes with, I don't see what good their extravagant salary could be to them. I must say it was paid with a regularity worthy of a large and honourable trading company. For the rest, the only thing to eat — though it didn't look eatable in the least — I saw in their possession was a few lumps of some stuff like half-cooked dough,[8] of a dirty lavender colour, they kept wrapped in leaves, and now and then swallowed a piece of, but so small that it seemed done more for the looks of the thing than for any serious purpose of sustenance. Why in the name of all the gnawing devils of hunger they didn't go for us — they were thirty to five — and have a good tuck-in for once, amazes me now when I think of it. They were big powerful men, with not much capacity to weigh the consequences, with courage, with strength, even yet, though their skins were no longer glossy and their muscles no longer hard. And I saw that something restraining, one of those human secrets that baffle probability, had come into play there. I looked at them with a swift quickening of interest — not because it occurred to me I might be eaten by them before very long, though I own to you that just then I perceived — in a new light, as it were — how unwholesome the pilgrims looked, and I hoped, yes, I positively hoped, that my aspect was not so — what shall I say? — so — unappetizing: a touch of fantastic vanity which fitted well with the dream-sensation that pervaded all my days at that time. Perhaps I had a little fever, too. One can't live with one's finger everlastingly on one's pulse. I had often 'a little fever,' or a little touch of other things — the playful paw-strokes of the wilderness, the preliminary trifling before the more serious onslaught which came in due course. Yes; I looked at them as you would on any human being, with a curiosity

7. Which they could use to make ornamental rings for their arms and legs.
8. Kwanga, made from the flour of the cassava root and still a traditional dish in the Congo.

of their impulses, motives, capacities, weaknesses, when brought to the test of an inexorable physical necessity. Restraint! What possible restraint? Was it superstition, disgust, patience, fear — or some kind of primitive honour? No fear can stand up to hunger, no patience can wear it out, disgust simply does not exist where hunger is; and as to superstition, beliefs, and what you may call principles, they are less than chaff in a breeze. Don't you know the devilry of lingering starvation, its exasperating torment, its black thoughts, its sombre and brooding ferocity? Well, I do. It takes a man all his inborn strength to fight hunger properly. It's really easier to face bereavement, dishonour, and the perdition of one's soul — than this kind of prolonged hunger. Sad, but true. And these chaps, too, had no earthly reason for any kind of scruple. Restraint! I would just as soon have expected restraint from a hyena prowling amongst the corpses of a battlefield. But there was the fact facing me — the fact dazzling, to be seen, like the foam on the depths of the sea, like a ripple on an unfathomable enigma, a mystery greater — when I thought of it — than the curious, inexplicable note of desperate grief in this savage clamour that had swept by us on the river-bank, behind the blind whiteness of the fog.

"Two pilgrims were quarrelling in hurried whispers as to which bank. 'Left.' "no, no; how can you? Right, right, of course.' 'It is very serious,' said the manager's voice behind me; 'I would be desolated if anything should happen to Mr. Kurtz before we came up.' I looked at him, and had not the slightest doubt he was sincere. He was just the kind of man who would wish to preserve appearances. That was his restraint. But when he muttered something about going on at once, I did not even take the trouble to answer him. I knew, and he knew, that it was impossible. Were we to let go our hold of the bottom, we would be absolutely in the air — in space. We wouldn't be able to tell where we were going to — whether up or down stream, or across — till we fetched against one bank or the other — and then we wouldn't know at first which it was. Of course I made no move. I had no mind for a smash-up. You couldn't imagine a more deadly place for a shipwreck. Whether we drowned at once or not, we were sure to perish speedily in one way or another. 'I authorize you to take all the risks,' he said, after a short silence. 'I refuse to take any,' I said shortly; which was just the answer he expected, though its tone might have surprised him. 'Well, I must defer to your judgment. You are captain,' he said with marked civility. I turned my shoulder to him in sign of my appreciation, and looked into the fog. How long would it last? It was the most hopeless lookout. The approach to this Kurtz grubbing for ivory in the wretched bush was beset by as many dangers as though he had been an enchanted princess sleeping in a fabulous castle. 'Will they attack, do you think?' asked the manager, in a confidential tone.

"I did not think they would attack, for several obvious reasons. The thick fog was one. If they left the bank in their canoes they would get lost in it, as we would be if we attempted to move. Still, I had also judged the jungle of both banks quite impenetrable — and yet eyes were in it, eyes that had seen us. The riverside bushes were certainly very thick; but the undergrowth behind was evidently penetrable. However, during the short lift I had seen no canoes anywhere in the reach — certainly not abreast of the steamer. But what made the idea of attack inconceivable to me was the nature of the noise — of the cries we had heard. They had not the fierce character boding immediate hostile intention. Unexpected, wild, and violent as they had been, they had given me an irresistible impression of sorrow. The glimpse of the steamboat had for some reason filled those savages with unrestrained grief. The danger, if any, I expounded, was from our proximity to a great human passion let loose. Even extreme grief may ultimately vent itself in violence — but more generally takes the form of apathy. . . .

"You should have seen the pilgrims stare! They had no heart to grin, or even to revile me: but I believe they thought me gone mad — with fright, maybe. I delivered a regular lecture. My dear boys, it was no good bothering. Keep a lookout? Well, you may guess I watched the fog for the signs of lifting as a cat watches a mouse; but for anything else our eyes were of no more use to us than if we had been buried miles deep in a heap of cotton-wool. It felt like it, too — choking, warm, stifling. Besides, all I said, though it sounded extravagant, was absolutely true to fact. What we afterwards alluded to as an

attack was really an attempt at repulse. The action was very far from being aggressive — it was not even defensive, in the usual sense: it was undertaken under the stress of desperation, and in its essence was purely protective.

"It developed itself, I should say, two hours after the fog lifted, and its commencement was at a spot, roughly speaking, about a mile and a half below Kurtz's station. We had just floundered and flopped round a bend, when I saw an islet, a mere grassy hummock of bright green, in the middle of the stream. It was the only thing of the kind; but as we opened the reach more, I perceived it was the head of a long sand-bank, or rather of a chain of shallow patches stretching down the middle of the river. They were discoloured, just awash, and the whole lot was seen just under the water, exactly as a man's backbone is seen running down the middle of his back under the skin. Now, as far as I did see, I could go to the right or to the left of this. I didn't know either channel, of course. The banks looked pretty well alike, the depth appeared the same; but as I had been informed the station was on the west side, I naturally headed for the western passage.

"No sooner had we fairly entered it than I became aware it was much narrower than I had supposed. To the left of us there was the long uninterrupted shoal, and to the right a high, steep bank heavily overgrown with bushes. Above the bush the trees stood in serried ranks. The twigs overhung the current thickly, and from distance to distance a large limb of some tree projected rigidly over the stream. It was then well on in the afternoon, the face of the forest was gloomy, and a broad strip of shadow had already fallen on the water. In this shadow we steamed up — very slowly, as you may imagine. I sheered her well inshore — the water being deepest near the bank, as the sounding-pole informed me.

"One of my hungry and forbearing friends was sounding in the bows just below me. This steamboat was exactly like a decked scow.[9] On the deck, there were two little teakwood houses, with doors and windows. The boiler was in the fore-end, and the machinery right astern. Over the whole there was a light roof, supported on stanchions. The funnel projected through that roof, and in front of the funnel a small cabin built of light planks served for a pilot-house. It contained a couch, two camp-stools, a loaded Martini-Henry[10] leaning in one corner, a tiny table, and the steering-wheel. It had a wide door in front and a broad shutter at each side. All these were always thrown open, of course. I spent my days perched up there on the extreme fore-end of that roof, before the door. At night I slept, or tried to, on the couch. An athletic black belonging to some coast tribe and educated by my poor predecessor, was the helmsman. He sported a pair of brass earrings, wore a blue cloth wrapper from the waist to the ankles, and thought all the world of himself. He was the most unstable kind of fool I had ever seen. He steered with no end of a swagger while you were by; but if he lost sight of you, he became instantly the prey of an abject funk, and would let that cripple of a steamboat get the upper hand of him in a minute.

"I was looking down at the sounding-pole, and feeling much annoyed to see at each try a little more of it stick out of that river, when I saw my poleman give up on the business suddenly, and stretch himself flat on the deck, without even taking the trouble to haul his pole in. He kept hold on it though, and it trailed in the water. At the same time the fireman, whom I could also see below me, sat down abruptly before his furnace and ducked his head. I was amazed. Then I had to look at the river mighty quick, because there was a snag in the fairway. Sticks, little sticks, were flying about — thick: they were whizzing before my nose, dropping below me, striking behind me against my pilot-house. All this time the river, the shore, the woods, were very quiet — perfectly quiet. I could only hear the heavy splashing thump of the stern-wheel and the patter of these things. We cleared the snag clumsily. Arrows, by Jove! We were being shot at! I stepped in quickly to close the shutter on the land-side. That fool-helmsman, his hands on the spokes, was lifting his knees high, stamping his feet, champing his mouth, like a reined-

9. A type of flat-bottomed boat.
10. A single-shot, lever-actuated rifle.

in horse. Confound him! And we were staggering within ten feet of the bank. I had to lean right out to swing the heavy shutter, and I saw a face amongst the leaves on the level with my own, looking at me very fierce and steady; and then suddenly, as though a veil had been removed from my eyes, I made out, deep in the tangled gloom, naked breasts, arms, legs, glaring eyes — the bush was swarming with human limbs in movement, glistening, of bronze colour. The twigs shook, swayed, and rustled, the arrows flew out of them, and then the shutter came to. 'Steer her straight,' I said to the helmsman. He held his head rigid, face forward; but his eyes rolled, he kept on lifting and setting down his feet gently, his mouth foamed a little. 'Keep quiet!' I said in a fury. I might just as well have ordered a tree not to sway in the wind. I darted out. Below me there was a great scuffle of feet on the iron deck; confused exclamations; a voice screamed, 'Can you turn back?' I caught sight of a V-shaped ripple on the water ahead. What? Another snag! A fusillade burst out under my feet. The pilgrims had opened with their Winchesters, and were simply squirting lead into that bush. A deuce of a lot of smoke came up and drove slowly forward. I swore at it. Now I couldn't see the ripple or the snag either. I stood in the doorway, peering, and the arrows came in swarms. They might have been poisoned, but they looked as though they wouldn't kill a cat. The bush began to howl. Our wood-cutters raised a warlike whoop; the report of a rifle just at my back deafened me. I glanced over my shoulder, and the pilot-house was yet full of noise and smoke when I made a dash at the wheel. The fool-nigger had dropped everything, to throw the shutter open and let off that Martini-Henry. He stood before the wide opening, glaring, and I yelled at him to come back, while I straightened the sudden twist out of that steamboat. There was no room to turn even if I had wanted to, the snag was somewhere very near ahead in that confounded smoke, there was no time to lose, so I just crowded her into the bank — right into the bank, where I knew the water was deep.

"We tore slowly along the overhanging bushes in a whirl of broken twigs and flying leaves. The fusillade below stopped short, as I had foreseen it would when the squirts got empty. I threw my head back to a glinting whizz that traversed the pilot-house, in at one shutter-hole and out at the other. Looking past that mad helmsman, who was shaking the empty rifle and yelling at the shore, I saw vague forms of men running bent double, leaping, gliding, distinct, incomplete, evanescent. Something big appeared in the air before the shutter, the rifle went overboard, and the man stepped back swiftly, looked at me over his shoulder in an extraordinary, profound, familiar manner, and fell upon my feet. The side of his head hit the wheel twice, and the end of what appeared a long cane clattered round and knocked over a little camp-stool. It looked as though after wrenching that thing from somebody ashore he had lost his balance in the effort. The thin smoke had blown away, we were clear of the snag, and looking ahead I could see that in another hundred yards or so I would be free to sheer off, away from the bank; but my feet felt so very warm and wet that I had to look down. The man had rolled on his back and stared straight up at me; both his hands clutched that cane. It was the shaft of a spear that, either thrown or lunged through the opening, had caught him in the side, just below the ribs; the blade had gone in out of sight, after making a frightful gash; my shoes were full; a pool of blood lay very still, gleaming dark-red under the wheel; his eyes shone with an amazing lustre. The fusillade burst out again. He looked at me anxiously, gripping the spear like something precious, with an air of being afraid I would try to take it away from him. I had to make an effort to free my eyes from his gaze and attend to the steering. With one hand I felt above my head for the line of the steam whistle, and jerked out screech after screech hurriedly. The tumult of angry and warlike yells was checked instantly, and then from the depths of the woods went out such a tremulous and prolonged wail of mournful fear and utter despair as may be imagined to follow the flight of the last hope from the earth. There was a great commotion in the bush; the shower of arrows stopped, a few dropping shots rang out sharply — then silence, in which the languid beat of the stern-wheel came plainly to my ears. I put the helm hard a-starboard at the moment when the pilgrim in pink pyjamas, very hot and agitated, appeared in the doorway. 'The manager sends me — ' he began in an official tone, and stopped short. 'Good God!' he said, glaring at the wounded man.

"We two whites stood over him, and his lustrous and inquiring glance enveloped us both. I declare it looked as though he would presently put to us some questions in an understandable language; but he died without uttering a sound, without moving a limb, without twitching a muscle. Only in the very last moment, as though in response to some sign we could not see, to some whisper we could not hear, he frowned heavily, and that frown gave to his black death-mask an inconceivably sombre, brooding, and menacing expression. The lustre of inquiring glance faded swiftly into vacant glassiness. 'Can you steer?' I asked the agent eagerly. He looked very dubious; but I made a grab at his arm, and he understood at once I meant him to steer whether or no. To tell you the truth, I was morbidly anxious to change my shoes and socks. 'He is dead,' murmured the fellow, immensely impressed. 'No doubt about it,' said I, tugging like mad at the shoe-laces. 'And by the way, I suppose Mr. Kurtz is dead as well by this time.'

"For the moment that was the dominant thought. There was a sense of extreme disappointment, as though I had found out I had been striving after something altogether without a substance. I couldn't have been more disgusted if I had travelled all this way for the sole purpose of talking with Mr. Kurtz. Talking with . . . I flung one shoe overboard, and became aware that that was exactly what I had been looking forward to — a talk with Kurtz. I made the strange discovery that I had never imagined him as doing, you know, but as discoursing. I didn't say to myself, 'Now I will never see him,' or 'Now I will never shake him by the hand,' but, 'Now I will never hear him.' The man presented himself as a voice. Not of course that I did not connect him with some sort of action. Hadn't I been told in all the tones of jealousy and admiration that he had collected, bartered, swindled, or stolen more ivory than all the other agents together? That was not the point. The point was in his being a gifted creature, and that of all his gifts the one that stood out preeminently, that carried with it a sense of real presence, was his ability to talk, his words — the gift of expression, the bewildering, the illuminating, the most exalted and the most contemptible, the pulsating stream of light, or the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness.

"The other shoe went flying unto the devil-god of that river. I thought, 'By Jove! it's all over. We are too late; he has vanished — the gift has vanished, by means of some spear, arrow, or club. I will never hear that chap speak after all' — and my sorrow had a startling extravagance of emotion, even such as I had noticed in the howling sorrow of these savages in the bush. I couldn't have felt more of lonely desolation somehow, had I been robbed of a belief or had missed my destiny in life. . . . Why do you sigh in this beastly way, somebody? Absurd? Well, absurd. Good Lord! mustn't a man ever — Here, give me some tobacco." . . .

There was a pause of profound stillness, then a match flared, and Marlow's lean face appeared, worn, hollow, with downward folds and dropped eyelids, with an aspect of concentrated attention; and as he took vigorous draws at his pipe, it seemed to retreat and advance out of the night in the regular flicker of tiny flame. The match went out.

"Absurd!" he cried. "This is the worst of trying to tell. . . . Here you all are, each moored with two good addresses, like a hulk[11] with two anchors, a butcher round one corner, a policeman round another, excellent appetites, and temperature normal — you hear — normal from year's end to year's end. And you say, Absurd! Absurd be — exploded! Absurd! My dear boys, what can you expect from a man who out of sheer nervousness had just flung overboard a pair of new shoes! Now I think of it, it is amazing I did not shed tears. I am, upon the whole, proud of my fortitude. I was cut to the quick at the idea of having lost the inestimable privilege of listening to the gifted Kurtz. Of course I was wrong. The privilege was waiting for me. Oh, yes, I heard more than enough. And I was right, too. A voice. He was very little more than a voice. And I heard — him — it — this voice — other voices — all of them were

11. A ship withdrawn from duty but still used onshore as, for example, a hospital or barracks.

so little more than voices — and the memory of that time itself lingers around me, impalpable, like a dying vibration of one immense jabber, silly, atrocious, sordid, savage, or simply mean, without any kind of sense. Voices, voices — even the girl herself — now — ”

He was silent for a long time.

“I laid the ghost of his gifts at last with a lie,” he began, suddenly. “Girl! What? Did I mention a girl? Oh, she is out of it — completely. They — the women, I mean — are out of it — should be out of it. We must help them to stay in that beautiful world of their own, lest ours gets worse. Oh, she had to be out of it. You should have heard the disinterred body of Mr. Kurtz saying, ‘My Intended.’ You would have perceived directly then how completely she was out of it. And the lofty frontal bone of Mr. Kurtz! They say the hair goes on growing sometimes, but this — ah — specimen, was impressively bald. The wilderness had patted him on the head, and, behold, it was like a ball — an ivory ball; it had caressed him, and — lo! — he had withered; it had taken him, loved him, embraced him, got into his veins, consumed his flesh, and sealed his soul to its own by the inconceivable ceremonies of some devilish initiation. He was its spoiled and pampered favourite. Ivory? I should think so. Heaps of it, stacks of it. The old mud shanty was bursting with it. You would think there was not a single tusk left either above or below the ground in the whole country. ‘Mostly fossil,’ the manager had remarked, disparagingly. It was no more fossil than I am; but they call it fossil when it is dug up. It appears these niggers do bury the tusks sometimes — but evidently they couldn’t bury this parcel deep enough to save the gifted Mr. Kurtz from his fate. We filled the steamboat with it, and had to pile a lot on the deck. Thus he could see and enjoy as long as he could see, because the appreciation of this favour had remained with him to the last. You should have heard him say, ‘My ivory.’ Oh, yes, I heard him. ‘My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my — ‘ everything belonged to him. It made me hold my breath in expectation of hearing the wilderness burst into a prodigious peal of laughter that would shake the fixed stars in their places. Everything belonged to him — but that was a trifle. The thing was to know what he belonged to, how many powers of darkness claimed him for their own. That was the reflection that made you creepy all over. It was impossible — it was not good for one either — trying to imagine. He had taken a high seat amongst the devils of the land — I mean literally. You can’t understand. How could you? — with solid pavement under your feet, surrounded by kind neighbours ready to cheer you or to fall on you, stepping delicately between the butcher and the policeman, in the holy terror of scandal and gallows and lunatic asylums — how can you imagine what particular region of the first ages a man’s untrammelled feet may take him into by the way of solitude — utter solitude without a policeman — by the way of silence — utter silence, where no warning voice of a kind neighbour can be heard whispering of public opinion? These little things make all the great difference. When they are gone you must fall back upon your own innate strength, upon your own capacity for faithfulness. Of course you may be too much of a fool to go wrong — too dull even to know you are being assaulted by the powers of darkness. I take it, no fool ever made a bargain for his soul with the devil; the fool is too much of a fool, or the devil too much of a devil — I don’t know which. Or you may be such a thunderingly exalted creature as to be altogether deaf and blind to anything but heavenly sights and sounds. Then the earth for you is only a standing place — and whether to be like this is your loss or your gain I won’t pretend to say. But most of us are neither one nor the other. The earth for us is a place to live in, where we must put up with sights, with sounds, with smells, too, by Jove! — breathe dead hippo, so to speak, and not be contaminated. And there, don’t you see? Your strength comes in, the faith in your ability for the digging of unostentatious holes to bury the stuff in — your power of devotion, not to yourself, but to an obscure, back-breaking business. And that’s difficult enough. Mind, I am not trying to excuse or even explain — I am trying to account to myself for — for — Mr. Kurtz — for the shade of Mr. Kurtz. This initiated wraith from the back of Nowhere honoured me with its amazing confidence before it vanished altogether. This was because it could speak English to me. The original Kurtz had been educated partly in England, and — as he was

good enough to say himself — his sympathies were in the right place. His mother was half-English, his father was half-French. All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz; and by and by I learned that, most appropriately, the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs[12] had intrusted him with the making of a report, for its future guidance. And he had written it, too. I've seen it. I've read it. It was eloquent, vibrating with eloquence, but too high-strung, I think. Seventeen pages of close writing he had found time for! But this must have been before his — let us say — nerves, went wrong, and caused him to preside at certain midnight dances ending with unspeakable rites, which — as far as I reluctantly gathered from what I heard at various times — were offered up to him — do you understand? — to Mr. Kurtz himself. But it was a beautiful piece of writing. The opening paragraph, however, in the light of later information, strikes me now as ominous. He began with the argument that we whites, from the point of development we had arrived at, 'must necessarily appear to them [savages] in the nature of supernatural beings — we approach them with the might of a deity,' and so on, and so on. 'By the simple exercise of our will we can exert a power for good practically unbounded,' etc., etc. From that point he soared and took me with him. The peroration was magnificent, though difficult to remember, you know. It gave me the notion of an exotic Immensity ruled by an august Benevolence. It made me tingle with enthusiasm. This was the unbounded power of eloquence — of words — of burning noble words. There were no practical hints to interrupt the magic current of phrases, unless a kind of note at the foot of the last page, scrawled evidently much later, in an unsteady hand, may be regarded as the exposition of a method. It was very simple, and at the end of that moving appeal to every altruistic sentiment it blazed at you, luminous and terrifying, like a flash of lightning in a serene sky: 'Exterminate all the brutes!' The curious part was that he had apparently forgotten all about that valuable postscriptum, because, later on, when he in a sense came to himself, he repeatedly entreated me to take good care of 'my pamphlet' (he called it), as it was sure to have in the future a good influence upon his career. I had full information about all these things, and, besides, as it turned out, I was to have the care of his memory. I've done enough for it to give me the indisputable right to lay it, if I choose, for an everlasting rest in the dust-bin of progress, amongst all the sweepings and, figuratively speaking, all the dead cats of civilization. But then, you see, I can't choose. He won't be forgotten. Whatever he was, he was not common. He had the power to charm or frighten rudimentary souls into an aggravated witch-dance in his honour; he could also fill the small souls of the pilgrims with bitter misgivings: he had one devoted friend at least, and he had conquered one soul in the world that was neither rudimentary nor tainted with self-seeking. No; I can't forget him, though I am not prepared to affirm the fellow was exactly worth the life we lost in getting to him. I missed my late helmsman awfully — I missed him even while his body was still lying in the pilot-house. Perhaps you will think it passing strange this regret for a savage who was no more account than a grain of sand in a black Sahara.[13] Well, don't you see, he had done something, he had steered; for months I had him at my back — a help — an instrument. It was a kind of partnership. He steered for me — I had to look after him, I worried about his deficiencies, and thus a subtle bond had been created, of which I only became aware when it was suddenly broken. And the intimate profundity of that look he gave me when he received his hurt remains to this day in my memory — like a claim of distant kinship affirmed in a supreme moment.

"Poor fool! If he had only left that shutter alone. He had no restraint, no restraint — just like Kurtz — a tree swayed by the wind. As soon as I had put on a dry pair of slippers, I dragged him out, after first jerking the spear out of his side, which operation I confess I performed with my eyes shut tight. His heels leaped together over the little doorstep; his shoulders were pressed to my breast; I hugged him from behind desperately. Oh! he was heavy, heavy; heavier than any man on earth, I should imagine. Then

12. Reminiscent of the International Association for the Exploring and Civilizing of Africa, founded by King Leopold and basically just a front organization to sanitize Belgium's true mission in the Congo, to harvest its ivory.

13. In Africa, the world's largest desert.

without more ado I tipped him overboard. The current snatched him as though he had been a wisp of grass, and I saw the body roll over twice before I lost sight of it for ever. All the pilgrims and the manager were then congregated on the awning-deck about the pilot-house, chattering at each other like a flock of excited magpies, and there was a scandalized murmur at my heartless promptitude. What they wanted to keep that body hanging about for I can't guess. Embalm it, maybe. But I had also heard another, and a very ominous, murmur on the deck below. My friends the wood-cutters were likewise scandalized, and with a better show of reason — though I admit that the reason itself was quite inadmissible. Oh, quite! I had made up my mind that if my late helmsman was to be eaten, the fishes alone should have him. He had been a very second-rate helmsman while alive, but now he was dead he might have become a first-class temptation, and possibly cause some startling trouble. Besides, I was anxious to take the wheel, the man in pink pyjamas showing himself a hopeless duffer at the business.

"This I did directly the simple funeral was over. We were going half-speed, keeping right in the middle of the stream, and I listened to the talk about me. They had given up Kurtz, they had given up the station; Kurtz was dead, and the station had been burnt — and so on — and so on. The red-haired pilgrim was beside himself with the thought that at least this poor Kurtz had been properly avenged. 'Say! We must have made a glorious slaughter of them in the bush. Eh? What do you think? Say?' He positively danced, the bloodthirsty little gingery beggar. And he had nearly fainted when he saw the wounded man! I could not help saying, 'You made a glorious lot of smoke, anyhow.' I had seen, from the way the tops of the bushes rustled and flew, that almost all the shots had gone too high. You can't hit anything unless you take aim and fire from the shoulder; but these chaps fired from the hip with their eyes shut. The retreat, I maintained — and I was right — was caused by the screeching of the steam whistle. Upon this they forgot Kurtz, and began to howl at me with indignant protests.

"The manager stood by the wheel murmuring confidentially about the necessity of getting well away down the river before dark at all events, when I saw in the distance a clearing on the riverside and the outlines of some sort of building. 'What's this?' I asked. He clapped his hands in wonder. 'The station![14]' he cried. I edged in at once, still going half-speed.

"Through my glasses I saw the slope of a hill interspersed with rare trees and perfectly free from under-growth. A long decaying building on the summit was half buried in the high grass; the large holes in the peaked roof gaped black from afar; the jungle and the woods made a background. There was no enclosure or fence of any kind; but there had been one apparently, for near the house half-a-dozen slim posts remained in a row, roughly trimmed, and with their upper ends ornamented with round carved balls. The rails, or whatever there had been between, had disappeared. Of course the forest surrounded all that. The river-bank was clear, and on the waterside I saw a white man under a hat like a cart-wheel beckoning persistently with his whole arm. Examining the edge of the forest above and below, I was almost certain I could see movements — human forms gliding here and there. I steamed past prudently, then stopped the engines and let her drift down. The man on the shore began to shout, urging us to land. 'We have been attacked,' screamed the manager. 'I know — I know. It's all right,' yelled back the other, as cheerful as you please. 'Come along. It's all right. I am glad.'

"His aspect reminded me of something I had seen — something funny I had seen somewhere. As I manoeuvred to get alongside, I was asking myself, 'What does this fellow look like?' Suddenly I got it. He looked like a harlequin.[15] His clothes had been made of some stuff that was brown holland probably, but it was covered with patches all over, with bright patches, blue, red, and yellow — patches on the back, patches on the front, patches on elbows, on knees; coloured binding around his jacket, scarlet edging at the bottom of his trousers; and the sun-shine made him look extremely gay and wonderfully

14. Present day Kisangani, now one of the largest cities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
15. Stock character in Italian comedies, usually a servant, identifiable by multicoloured clothing.

neat withal, because you could see how beautifully all this patching had been done. A beardless, boyish face, very fair, no features to speak of, nose peeling, little blue eyes, smiles and frowns chasing each other over that open countenance like sunshine and shadow on a wind-swept plain. 'Look out, captain!' he cried; 'there's a snag lodged in here last night.' What! Another snag? I confess I swore shamefully. I had nearly holed my cripple, to finish off that charming trip. The harlequin on the bank turned his little pug-nose up to me. 'You English?' he asked, all smiles. 'Are you?' I shouted from the wheel. The smiles vanished, and he shook his head as if sorry for my disappointment. Then he brightened up. 'Never mind!' he cried encouragingly. 'Are we in time?' I asked. 'He is up there,' he replied, with a toss of the head up the hill, and becoming gloomy all of a sudden. His face was like the autumn sky, overcast one moment and bright the next.

"When the manager, escorted by the pilgrims, all of them armed to the teeth, had gone to the house this chap came on board. 'I say, I don't like this. These natives are in the bush,' I said. He assured me earnestly it was all right. 'They are simple people,' he added; 'well, I am glad you came. It took me all my time to keep them off.' 'But you said it was all right,' I cried. 'Oh, they meant no harm,' he said; and as I stared he corrected himself, 'Not exactly.' Then vivaciously, 'My faith, your pilot-house wants a clean-up!' In the next breath he advised me to keep enough steam on the boiler to blow the whistle in case of any trouble. 'One good screech will do more for you than all your rifles. They are simple people,' he repeated. He rattled away at such a rate he quite overwhelmed me. He seemed to be trying to make up for lots of silence, and actually hinted, laughing, that such was the case. 'Don't you talk with Mr. Kurtz?' I said. 'You don't talk with that man — you listen to him,' he exclaimed with severe exaltation. 'But now — ' He waved his arm, and in the twinkling of an eye was in the utter-most depths of despondency. In a moment he came up again with a jump, possessed himself of both my hands, shook them continuously, while he gabbled: 'Brother sailor . . . honour . . . pleasure . . . delight . . . introduce myself . . . Russian . . . son of an arch-priest . . . Government of Tambov[16] . . . What? Tobacco! English tobacco; the excellent English tobacco! Now, that's brotherly. Smoke? Where's a sailor that does not smoke?"

"The pipe soothed him, and gradually I made out he had run away from school, had gone to sea in a Russian ship; ran away again; served some time in English ships; was now reconciled with the arch-priest. He made a point of that. 'But when one is young one must see things, gather experience, ideas; enlarge the mind.' 'Here!' I interrupted. 'You can never tell! Here I met Mr. Kurtz,' he said, youthfully solemn and reproachful. I held my tongue after that. It appears he had persuaded a Dutch trading-house on the coast to fit him out with stores and goods, and had started for the interior with a light heart and no more idea of what would happen to him than a baby. He had been wandering about that river for nearly two years alone, cut off from everybody and everything. 'I am not so young as I look. I am twenty-five,' he said. 'At first old Van Shuyten would tell me to go to the devil,' he narrated with keen enjoyment; 'but I stuck to him, and talked and talked, till at last he got afraid I would talk the hind-leg off his favourite dog, so he gave me some cheap things and a few guns, and told me he hoped he would never see my face again. Good old Dutchman, Van Shuyten. I've sent him one small lot of ivory a year ago, so that he can't call me a little thief when I get back. I hope he got it. And for the rest I don't care. I had some wood stacked for you. That was my old house. Did you see?'

"I gave him Towson's book. He made as though he would kiss me, but restrained himself. 'The only book I had left, and I thought I had lost it,' he said, looking at it ecstatically. 'So many accidents happen to a man going about alone, you know. Canoes get upset sometimes — and sometimes you've got to clear out so quick when the people get angry.' He thumbed the pages. 'You made notes in Russian?' I asked. He nodded. 'I thought they were written in cipher,' I said. He laughed, then became serious. 'I had lots of trouble to keep these people off,' he said. 'Did they want to kill you?' I asked. 'Oh, no!' he cried,

16. One of Russia's centres of government.

and checked himself. ‘Why did they attack us?’ I pursued. He hesitated, then said shamefacedly, ‘They don’t want him to go.’ ‘Don’t they?’ I said curiously. He nodded a nod full of mystery and wisdom. ‘I tell you,’ he cried, ‘this man has enlarged my mind.’ He opened his arms wide, staring at me with his little blue eyes that were perfectly round.”

92.

Heart of Darkness: Chapter 3

Joseph Conrad

"I looked at him, lost in astonishment. There he was before me, in motley, as though he had absconded from a troupe of mimes, enthusiastic, fabulous. His very existence was improbable, inexplicable, and altogether bewildering. He was an insoluble problem. It was inconceivable how he had existed, how he had succeeded in getting so far, how he had managed to remain — why he did not instantly disappear. 'I went a little farther,' he said, 'then still a little farther — till I had gone so far that I don't know how I'll ever get back. Never mind. Plenty time. I can manage. You take Kurtz away quick — quick — I tell you.' The glamour of youth enveloped his parti-coloured rags, his destitution, his loneliness, the essential desolation of his futile wanderings. For months — for years — his life hadn't been worth a day's purchase; and there he was gallantly, thoughtlessly alive, to all appearances indestructible solely by the virtue of his few years and of his unreflecting audacity. I was seduced into something like admiration — like envy. Glamour urged him on, glamour kept him unscathed. He surely wanted nothing from the wilderness but space to breathe in and to push on through. His need was to exist, and to move onwards at the greatest possible risk, and with a maximum of privation. If the absolutely pure, uncalculating, unpractical spirit of adventure had ever ruled a human being, it ruled this bepatched youth. I almost envied him the possession of this modest and clear flame. It seemed to have consumed all thought of self so completely, that even while he was talking to you, you forgot that it was he — the man before your eyes — who had gone through these things. I did not envy him his devotion to Kurtz, though. He had not meditated over it. It came to him, and he accepted it with a sort of eager fatalism. I must say that to me it appeared about the most dangerous thing in every way he had come upon so far.

"They had come together unavoidably, like two ships becalmed near each other, and lay rubbing sides at last. I suppose Kurtz wanted an audience, because on a certain occasion, when encamped in the forest, they had talked all night, or more probably Kurtz had talked. 'We talked of everything,' he said, quite transported at the recollection. 'I forgot there was such a thing as sleep. The night did not seem to last an hour. Everything! Everything! . . . Of love, too.' 'Ah, he talked to you of love!' I said, much amused. 'It isn't what you think,' he cried, almost passionately. 'It was in general. He made me see things — things.'

"He threw his arms up. We were on deck at the time, and the headman of my wood-cutters, lounging near by, turned upon him his heavy and glittering eyes. I looked around, and I don't know why, but I assure you that never, never before, did this land, this river, this jungle, the very arch of this blazing sky, appear to me so hopeless and so dark, so impenetrable to human thought, so pitiless to human weakness. 'And, ever since, you have been with him, of course?' I said.

"On the contrary. It appears their intercourse had been very much broken by various causes. He had, as he informed me proudly, managed to nurse Kurtz through two illnesses (he alluded to it as you would to some risky feat), but as a rule Kurtz wandered alone, far in the depths of the forest. 'Very often coming to this station, I had to wait days and days before he would turn up,' he said. 'Ah, it was worth waiting for! — sometimes.' 'What was he doing? exploring or what?' I asked. 'Oh, yes, of course'; he had discovered lots of villages, a lake, too — he did not know exactly in what direction; it was dangerous to

inquire too much — but mostly his expeditions had been for ivory. 'But he had no goods to trade with by that time,' I objected. 'There's a good lot of cartridges left even yet,' he answered, looking away. 'To speak plainly, he raided the country,' I said. He nodded. 'Not alone, surely!' He muttered something about the villages round that lake. 'Kurtz got the tribe to follow him, did he?' I suggested. He fidgeted a little. 'They adored him,' he said. The tone of these words was so extraordinary that I looked at him searchingly. It was curious to see his mingled eagerness and reluctance to speak of Kurtz. The man filled his life, occupied his thoughts, swayed his emotions. 'What can you expect?' he burst out; 'he came to them with thunder and lightning, you know — and they had never seen anything like it — and very terrible. He could be very terrible. You can't judge Mr. Kurtz as you would an ordinary man. No, no, no! Now — just to give you an idea — I don't mind telling you, he wanted to shoot me, too, one day — but I don't judge him.' 'Shoot you!' I cried 'What for?' 'Well, I had a small lot of ivory the chief of that village near my house gave me. You see I used to shoot game for them. Well, he wanted it, and wouldn't hear reason. He declared he would shoot me unless I gave him the ivory and then cleared out of the country, because he could do so, and had a fancy for it, and there was nothing on earth to prevent him killing whom he jolly well pleased. And it was true, too. I gave him the ivory. What did I care! But I didn't clear out. No, no. I couldn't leave him. I had to be careful, of course, till we got friendly again for a time. He had his second illness then. Afterwards I had to keep out of the way; but I didn't mind. He was living for the most part in those villages on the lake. When he came down to the river, sometimes he would take to me, and sometimes it was better for me to be careful. This man suffered too much. He hated all this, and somehow he couldn't get away. When I had a chance I begged him to try and leave while there was time; I offered to go back with him. And he would say yes, and then he would remain; go off on another ivory hunt; disappear for weeks; forget himself amongst these people — forget himself — you know.' 'Why! he's mad,' I said. He protested indignantly. Mr. Kurtz couldn't be mad. If I had heard him talk, only two days ago, I wouldn't dare hint at such a thing. . . . I had taken up my binoculars while we talked, and was looking at the shore, sweeping the limit of the forest at each side and at the back of the house. The consciousness of there being people in that bush, so silent, so quiet — as silent and quiet as the ruined house on the hill — made me uneasy. There was no sign on the face of nature of this amazing tale that was not so much told as suggested to me in desolate exclamations, completed by shrugs, in interrupted phrases, in hints ending in deep sighs. The woods were unmoved, like a mask — heavy, like the closed door of a prison — they looked with their air of hidden knowledge, of patient expectation, of unapproachable silence. The Russian was explaining to me that it was only lately that Mr. Kurtz had come down to the river, bringing along with him all the fighting men of that lake tribe. He had been absent for several months — getting himself adored, I suppose — and had come down unexpectedly, with the intention to all appearance of making a raid either across the river or down stream. Evidently the appetite for more ivory had got the better of the — what shall I say? — less material aspirations. However he had got much worse suddenly. 'I heard he was lying helpless, and so I came up — took my chance,' said the Russian. 'Oh, he is bad, very bad.' I directed my glass to the house. There were no signs of life, but there was the ruined roof, the long mud wall peeping above the grass, with three little square window-holes, no two of the same size; all this brought within reach of my hand, as it were. And then I made a brusque movement, and one of the remaining posts of that vanished fence leaped up in the field of my glass. You remember I told you I had been struck at the distance by certain attempts at ornamentation, rather remarkable in the ruinous aspect of the place. Now I had suddenly a nearer view, and its first result was to make me throw my head back as if before a blow. Then I went carefully from post to post with my glass, and I saw my mistake. These round knobs were not ornamental but symbolic; they were expressive and puzzling, striking and disturbing — food for thought and also for vultures if there had been any looking down from the sky; but at all events for such ants as were industrious enough to ascend the pole. They would have been even more impressive, those heads on the stakes, if their faces

had not been turned to the house. Only one, the first I had made out, was facing my way. I was not so shocked as you may think. The start back I had given was really nothing but a movement of surprise. I had expected to see a knob of wood there, you know. I returned deliberately to the first I had seen — and there it was, black, dried, sunken, with closed eyelids — a head that seemed to sleep at the top of that pole, and, with the shrunken dry lips showing a narrow white line of the teeth, was smiling, too, smiling continuously at some endless and jocose dream of that eternal slumber.

"I am not disclosing any trade secrets. In fact, the manager said afterwards that Mr. Kurtz's methods had ruined the district. I have no opinion on that point, but I want you clearly to understand that there was nothing exactly profitable in these heads being there. They only showed that Mr. Kurtz lacked restraint in the gratification of his various lusts, that there was something wanting in him — some small matter which, when the pressing need arose, could not be found under his magnificent eloquence. Whether he knew of this deficiency himself I can't say. I think the knowledge came to him at last — only at the very last. But the wilderness had found him out early, and had taken on him a terrible vengeance for the fantastic invasion. I think it had whispered to him things about himself which he did not know, things of which he had no conception till he took counsel with this great solitude — and the whisper had proved irresistibly fascinating. It echoed loudly within him because he was hollow at the core. . . . I put down the glass, and the head that had appeared near enough to be spoken to seemed at once to have leaped away from me into inaccessible distance.

"The admirer of Mr. Kurtz was a bit crestfallen. In a hurried, indistinct voice he began to assure me he had not dared to take these — say, symbols — down. He was not afraid of the natives; they would not stir till Mr. Kurtz gave the word. His ascendancy was extraordinary. The camps of these people surrounded the place, and the chiefs came every day to see him. They would crawl. . . . 'I don't want to know anything of the ceremonies used when approaching Mr. Kurtz,' I shouted. Curious, this feeling that came over me that such details would be more intolerable than those heads drying on the stakes under Mr. Kurtz's windows. After all, that was only a savage sight, while I seemed at one bound to have been transported into some lightless region of subtle horrors, where pure, uncomplicated savagery was a positive relief, being something that had a right to exist — obviously — in the sunshine. The young man looked at me with surprise. I suppose it did not occur to him that Mr. Kurtz was no idol of mine. He forgot I hadn't heard any of these splendid monologues on, what was it? on love, justice, conduct of life — or what not. If it had come to crawling before Mr. Kurtz, he crawled as much as the veriest savage of them all. I had no idea of the conditions, he said: these heads were the heads of rebels. I shocked him excessively by laughing. Rebels! What would be the next definition I was to hear? There had been enemies, criminals, workers — and these were rebels. Those rebellious heads looked very subdued to me on their sticks. 'You don't know how such a life tries a man like Kurtz,' cried Kurtz's last disciple. 'Well, and you?' I said. 'I! I! I am a simple man. I have no great thoughts. I want nothing from anybody. How can you compare me to . . . ?' His feelings were too much for speech, and suddenly he broke down. 'I don't understand,' he groaned. 'I've been doing my best to keep him alive, and that's enough. I had no hand in all this. I have no abilities. There hasn't been a drop of medicine or a mouthful of invalid food for months here. He was shamefully abandoned. A man like this, with such ideas. Shamefully! Shamefully! I — I — haven't slept for the last ten nights . . .'

"His voice lost itself in the calm of the evening. The long shadows of the forest had slipped downhill while we talked, had gone far beyond the ruined hovel, beyond the symbolic row of stakes. All this was in the gloom, while we down there were yet in the sunshine, and the stretch of the river abreast of the clearing glittered in a still and dazzling splendour, with a murky and overshadowed bend above and below. Not a living soul was seen on the shore. The bushes did not rustle.

"Suddenly round the corner of the house a group of men appeared, as though they had come up from the ground. They waded waist-deep in the grass, in a compact body, bearing an improvised stretcher in

their midst. Instantly, in the emptiness of the landscape, a cry arose whose shrillness pierced the still air like a sharp arrow flying straight to the very heart of the land; and, as if by enchantment, streams of human beings — of naked human beings — with spears in their hands, with bows, with shields, with wild glances and savage movements, were poured into the clearing by the dark-faced and pensive forest. The bushes shook, the grass swayed for a time, and then everything stood still in attentive immobility.

"'Now, if he does not say the right thing to them we are all done for,' said the Russian at my elbow. The knot of men with the stretcher had stopped, too, halfway to the steamer, as if petrified. I saw the man on the stretcher sit up, lank and with an uplifted arm, above the shoulders of the bearers. 'Let us hope that the man who can talk so well of love in general will find some particular reason to spare us this time,' I said. I resented bitterly the absurd danger of our situation, as if to be at the mercy of that atrocious phantom had been a dishonouring necessity. I could not hear a sound, but through my glasses I saw the thin arm extended commandingly, the lower jaw moving, the eyes of that apparition shining darkly far in its bony head that nodded with grotesque jerks. Kurtz — Kurtz — that means short in German — don't it? Well, the name was as true as everything else in his life — and death. He looked at least seven feet long. His covering had fallen off, and his body emerged from it pitiful and appalling as from a winding-sheet. I could see the cage of his ribs all astir, the bones of his arm waving. It was as though an animated image of death carved out of old ivory had been shaking its hand with menaces at a motionless crowd of men made of dark and glittering bronze. I saw him open his mouth wide — it gave him a weirdly voracious aspect, as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him. A deep voice reached me faintly. He must have been shouting. He fell back suddenly. The stretcher shook as the bearers staggered forward again, and almost at the same time I noticed that the crowd of savages was vanishing without any perceptible movement of retreat, as if the forest that had ejected these beings so suddenly had drawn them in again as the breath is drawn in a long aspiration.

"Some of the pilgrims behind the stretcher carried his arms — two shot-guns, a heavy rifle, and a light revolver-carbine — the thunderbolts of that pitiful Jupiter.[1] The manager bent over him murmuring as he walked beside his head. They laid him down in one of the little cabins — just a room for a bed place and a camp-stool or two, you know. We had brought his belated correspondence, and a lot of torn envelopes and open letters littered his bed. His hand roamed feebly amongst these papers. I was struck by the fire of his eyes and the composed languor of his expression. It was not so much the exhaustion of disease. He did not seem in pain. This shadow looked satiated and calm, as though for the moment it had had its fill of all the emotions.

"He rustled one of the letters, and looking straight in my face said, 'I am glad.' Somebody had been writing to him about me. These special recommendations were turning up again. The volume of tone he emitted without effort, almost without the trouble of moving his lips, amazed me. A voice! a voice! It was grave, profound, vibrating, while the man did not seem capable of a whisper. However, he had enough strength in him — factitious no doubt — to very nearly make an end of us, as you shall hear directly.

"The manager appeared silently in the doorway; I stepped out at once and he drew the curtain after me. The Russian, eyed curiously by the pilgrims, was staring at the shore. I followed the direction of his glance.

"Dark human shapes could be made out in the distance, flitting indistinctly against the gloomy border of the forest, and near the river two bronze figures, leaning on tall spears, stood in the sunlight under fantastic head-dresses of spotted skins, warlike and still in statuesque repose. And from right to left along the lighted shore moved a wild and gorgeous apparition of a woman.

"She walked with measured steps, draped in striped and fringed cloths, treading the earth proudly,

1. In Roman mythology, the king of the gods, the counterpart in Greek mythology to Zeus.

with a slight jingle and flash of barbarous ornaments. She carried her head high; her hair was done in the shape of a helmet; she had brass leggings to the knee, brass wire gauntlets to the elbow, a crimson spot on her tawny cheek, innumerable necklaces of glass beads on her neck; bizarre things, charms, gifts of witch-men,[2] that hung about her, glittered and trembled at every step. She must have had the value of several elephant tusks upon her. She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there was something ominous and stately in her deliberate progress. And in the hush that had fallen suddenly upon the whole sorrowful land, the immense wilderness, the colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life seemed to look at her, pensive, as though it had been looking at the image of its own tenebrous and passionate soul.

"She came abreast of the steamer, stood still, and faced us. Her long shadow fell to the water's edge. Her face had a tragic and fierce aspect of wild sorrow and of dumb pain mingled with the fear of some struggling, half-shaped resolve. She stood looking at us without a stir, and like the wilderness itself, with an air of brooding over an inscrutable purpose. A whole minute passed, and then she made a step forward. There was a low jingle, a glint of yellow metal, a sway of fringed draperies, and she stopped as if her heart had failed her. The young fellow by my side growled. The pilgrims murmured at my back. She looked at us all as if her life had depended upon the unswerving steadiness of her glance. Suddenly she opened her bared arms and threw them up rigid above her head, as though in an uncontrollable desire to touch the sky, and at the same time the swift shadows darted out on the earth, swept around on the river, gathering the steamer into a shadowy embrace. A formidable silence hung over the scene.

"She turned away slowly, walked on, following the bank, and passed into the bushes to the left. Once only her eyes gleamed back at us in the dusk of the thickets before she disappeared.

"'If she had offered to come aboard I really think I would have tried to shoot her,' said the man of patches, nervously. 'I have been risking my life every day for the last fortnight to keep her out of the house. She got in one day and kicked up a row about those miserable rags I picked up in the storeroom to mend my clothes with. I wasn't decent. At least it must have been that, for she talked like a fury to Kurtz for an hour, pointing at me now and then. I don't understand the dialect of this tribe. Luckily for me, I fancy Kurtz felt too ill that day to care, or there would have been mischief. I don't understand. . . . No — it's too much for me. Ah, well, it's all over now.'

"At this moment I heard Kurtz's deep voice behind the curtain: 'Save me! — save the ivory, you mean. Don't tell me. Save ME! Why, I've had to save you. You are interrupting my plans now. Sick! Sick! Not so sick as you would like to believe. Never mind. I'll carry my ideas out yet — I will return. I'll show you what can be done. You with your little peddling notions — you are interfering with me. I will return. I. . . .'

"The manager came out. He did me the honour to take me under the arm and lead me aside. 'He is very low, very low,' he said. He considered it necessary to sigh, but neglected to be consistently sorrowful. 'We have done all we could for him — haven't we? But there is no disguising the fact, Mr. Kurtz has done more harm than good to the Company. He did not see the time was not ripe for vigorous action. Cautiously, cautiously — that's my principle. We must be cautious yet. The district is closed to us for a time. Deplorable! Upon the whole, the trade will suffer. I don't deny there is a remarkable quantity of ivory — mostly fossil. We must save it, at all events — but look how precarious the position is — and why? Because the method is unsound.' 'Do you,' said I, looking at the shore, 'call it "unsound method?"' 'Without doubt,' he exclaimed hotly. 'Don't you?' . . . 'No method at all,' I murmured after a while. 'Exactly,' he exulted. 'I anticipated this. Shows a complete want of judgment. It is my duty to point it out in the proper quarter.' 'Oh,' said I, 'that fellow — what's his name? — the brickmaker, will make a readable report for you.' He appeared confounded for a moment. It seemed to me I had never breathed

2. Whose job it is to prevent illness caused by witchcraft.

an atmosphere so vile, and I turned mentally to Kurtz for relief — positively for relief. 'Nevertheless I think Mr. Kurtz is a remarkable man,' I said with emphasis. He started, dropped on me a heavy glance, said very quietly, 'he WAS,' and turned his back on me. My hour of favour was over; I found myself lumped along with Kurtz as a partisan of methods for which the time was not ripe: I was unsound! Ah! but it was something to have at least a choice of nightmares.

"I had turned to the wilderness really, not to Mr. Kurtz, who, I was ready to admit, was as good as buried. And for a moment it seemed to me as if I also were buried in a vast grave full of unspeakable secrets. I felt an intolerable weight oppressing my breast, the smell of the damp earth, the unseen presence of victorious corruption, the darkness of an impenetrable night. . . . The Russian tapped me on the shoulder. I heard him mumbling and stammering something about 'brother seaman — couldn't conceal — knowledge of matters that would affect Mr. Kurtz's reputation.' I waited. For him evidently Mr. Kurtz was not in his grave; I suspect that for him Mr. Kurtz was one of the immortals. 'Well!' said I at last, 'speak out. As it happens, I am Mr. Kurtz's friend — in a way.'

"He stated with a good deal of formality that had we not been 'of the same profession,' he would have kept the matter to himself without regard to consequences. 'He suspected there was an active ill-will towards him on the part of these white men that — ' 'You are right,' I said, remembering a certain conversation I had over-heard. 'The manager thinks you ought to be hanged.' He showed a concern at this intelligence which amused me at first. 'I had better get out of the way quietly,' he said earnestly. 'I can do no more for Kurtz now, and they would soon find some excuse. What's to stop them? There's a military post three hundred miles from here.' 'Well, upon my word,' said I, 'perhaps you had better go if you have any friends amongst the savages near by.' 'Plenty,' he said. 'They are simple people — and I want nothing, you know.' He stood biting his lip, then: 'I don't want any harm to happen to these whites here, but of course I was thinking of Mr. Kurtz's reputation — but you are a brother seaman and — ' 'All right,' said I, after a time. 'Mr. Kurtz's reputation is safe with me.' I did not know how truly I spoke.

"He informed me, lowering his voice, that it was Kurtz who had ordered the attack to be made on the steamer. 'He hated sometimes the idea of being taken away — and then again. . . . But I don't understand these matters. I am a simple man. He thought it would scare you away — that you would give it up, thinking him dead. I could not stop him. Oh, I had an awful time of it this last month.' 'Very well,' I said. 'He is all right now.' 'Ye-e-es,' he muttered, not very convinced apparently. 'Thanks,' said I; 'I shall keep my eyes open.' 'But quiet-eh?' he urged anxiously. 'It would be awful for his reputation if anybody here — ' I promised a complete discretion with great gravity. 'I have a canoe and three black fellows waiting not very far. I am off. Could you give me a few Martini-Henry cartridges?' I could, and did, with proper secrecy. He helped himself, with a wink at me, to a handful of my tobacco. 'Between sailors — you know — good English tobacco.' At the door of the pilot-house he turned round — 'I say, haven't you a pair of shoes you could spare?' He raised one leg. 'Look.' The soles were tied with knotted strings sandalwise under his bare feet. I rooted out an old pair, at which he looked with admiration before tucking it under his left arm. One of his pockets (bright red) was bulging with cartridges, from the other (dark blue) peeped 'Towson's Inquiry,' etc., etc. He seemed to think himself excellently well equipped for a renewed encounter with the wilderness. 'Ah! I'll never, never meet such a man again. You ought to have heard him recite poetry — his own, too, it was, he told me. Poetry!' He rolled his eyes at the recollection of these delights. 'Oh, he enlarged my mind!' 'Good-bye,' said I. He shook hands and vanished in the night. Sometimes I ask myself whether I had ever really seen him — whether it was possible to meet such a phenomenon! . . .

"When I woke up shortly after midnight his warning came to my mind with its hint of danger that seemed, in the starred darkness, real enough to make me get up for the purpose of having a look round. On the hill a big fire burned, illuminating fitfully a crooked corner of the station-house. One of the

agents with a picket of a few of our blacks, armed for the purpose, was keeping guard over the ivory; but deep within the forest, red gleams that wavered, that seemed to sink and rise from the ground amongst confused columnar shapes of intense blackness, showed the exact position of the camp where Mr. Kurtz's adorers were keeping their uneasy vigil. The monotonous beating of a big drum filled the air with muffled shocks and a lingering vibration. A steady droning sound of many men chanting each to himself some weird incantation came out from the black, flat wall of the woods as the humming of bees comes out of a hive, and had a strange narcotic effect upon my half-awake senses. I believe I dozed off leaning over the rail, till an abrupt burst of yells, an overwhelming outbreak of a pent-up and mysterious frenzy, woke me up in a bewildered wonder. It was cut short all at once, and the low droning went on with an effect of audible and soothing silence. I glanced casually into the little cabin. A light was burning within, but Mr. Kurtz was not there.

"I think I would have raised an outcry if I had believed my eyes. But I didn't believe them at first — the thing seemed so impossible. The fact is I was completely unnerved by a sheer blank fright, pure abstract terror, unconnected with any distinct shape of physical danger. What made this emotion so overpowering was — how shall I define it? — the moral shock I received, as if something altogether monstrous, intolerable to thought and odious to the soul, had been thrust upon me unexpectedly. This lasted of course the merest fraction of a second, and then the usual sense of commonplace, deadly danger, the possibility of a sudden onslaught and massacre, or something of the kind, which I saw impending, was positively welcome and composing. It pacified me, in fact, so much that I did not raise an alarm.

"There was an agent buttoned up inside an ulster[3] and sleeping on a chair on deck within three feet of me. The yells had not awakened him; he snored very slightly; I left him to his slumbers and leaped ashore. I did not betray Mr. Kurtz — it was ordered I should never betray him — it was written I should be loyal to the nightmare of my choice. I was anxious to deal with this shadow by myself alone — and to this day I don't know why I was so jealous of sharing with any one the peculiar blackness of that experience.

"As soon as I got on the bank I saw a trail — a broad trail through the grass. I remember the exultation with which I said to myself, 'He can't walk — he is crawling on all-fours — I've got him.' The grass was wet with dew. I strode rapidly with clenched fists. I fancy I had some vague notion of falling upon him and giving him a drubbing. I don't know. I had some imbecile thoughts. The knitting old woman with the cat obtruded herself upon my memory as a most improper person to be sitting at the other end of such an affair. I saw a row of pilgrims squirting lead in the air out of Winchesters held to the hip. I thought I would never get back to the steamer, and imagined myself living alone and unarmed in the woods to an advanced age. Such silly things — you know. And I remember I confounded the beat of the drum with the beating of my heart, and was pleased at its calm regularity.

"I kept to the track though — then stopped to listen. The night was very clear; a dark blue space, sparkling with dew and starlight, in which black things stood very still. I thought I could see a kind of motion ahead of me. I was strangely cocksure of everything that night. I actually left the track and ran in a wide semicircle (I verily believe chuckling to myself) so as to get in front of that stir, of that motion I had seen — if indeed I had seen anything. I was circumventing Kurtz as though it had been a boyish game.

"I came upon him, and, if he had not heard me coming, I would have fallen over him, too, but he got up in time. He rose, unsteady, long, pale, indistinct, like a vapour exhaled by the earth, and swayed slightly, misty and silent before me; while at my back the fires loomed between the trees, and the murmur of many voices issued from the forest. I had cut him off cleverly; but when actually confronting him

3. A long, loose-fitting overcoat.

I seemed to come to my senses, I saw the danger in its right proportion. It was by no means over yet. Suppose he began to shout? Though he could hardly stand, there was still plenty of vigour in his voice. 'Go away — hide yourself,' he said, in that profound tone. It was very awful. I glanced back. We were within thirty yards from the nearest fire. A black figure stood up, strode on long black legs, waving long black arms, across the glow. It had horns — antelope horns, I think — on its head. Some sorcerer, some witch-man, no doubt: it looked fiendlike enough. 'Do you know what you are doing?' I whispered. 'Perfectly,' he answered, raising his voice for that single word: it sounded to me far off and yet loud, like a hail through a speaking-trumpet. 'If he makes a row we are lost,' I thought to myself. This clearly was not a case for fisticuffs, even apart from the very natural aversion I had to beat that Shadow — this wandering and tormented thing. 'You will be lost,' I said — 'utterly lost.' One gets sometimes such a flash of inspiration, you know. I did say the right thing, though indeed he could not have been more irretrievably lost than he was at this very moment, when the foundations of our intimacy were being laid — to endure — to endure — even to the end — even beyond.

"'I had immense plans,' he muttered irresolutely. 'Yes,' said I; 'but if you try to shout I'll smash your head with — ' There was not a stick or a stone near. 'I will throttle you for good,' I corrected myself. 'I was on the threshold of great things,' he pleaded, in a voice of longing, with a wistfulness of tone that made my blood run cold. 'And now for this stupid scoundrel — ' 'Your success in Europe is assured in any case,' I affirmed steadily. I did not want to have the throttling of him, you understand — and indeed it would have been very little use for any practical purpose. I tried to break the spell — the heavy, mute spell of the wilderness — that seemed to draw him to its pitiless breast by the awakening of forgotten and brutal instincts, by the memory of gratified and monstrous passions. This alone, I was convinced, had driven him out to the edge of the forest, to the bush, towards the gleam of fires, the throb of drums, the drone of weird incantations; this alone had beguiled his unlawful soul beyond the bounds of permitted aspirations. And, don't you see, the terror of the position was not in being knocked on the head — though I had a very lively sense of that danger, too — but in this, that I had to deal with a being to whom I could not appeal in the name of anything high or low. I had, even like the niggers, to invoke him — himself — his own exalted and incredible degradation. There was nothing either above or below him, and I knew it. He had kicked himself loose of the earth. Confound the man! he had kicked the very earth to pieces. He was alone, and I before him did not know whether I stood on the ground or floated in the air. I've been telling you what we said — repeating the phrases we pronounced — but what's the good? They were common everyday words — the familiar, vague sounds exchanged on every waking day of life. But what of that? They had behind them, to my mind, the terrific suggestiveness of words heard in dreams, of phrases spoken in nightmares. Soul! If anybody ever struggled with a soul, I am the man. And I wasn't arguing with a lunatic either. Believe me or not, his intelligence was perfectly clear — concentrated, it is true, upon himself with horrible intensity, yet clear; and therein was my only chance — barring, of course, the killing him there and then, which wasn't so good, on account of unavoidable noise. But his soul was mad. Being alone in the wilderness, it had looked within itself, and, by heavens! I tell you, it had gone mad. I had — for my sins, I suppose — to go through the ordeal of looking into it myself. No eloquence could have been so withering to one's belief in mankind as his final burst of sincerity. He struggled with himself, too. I saw it — I heard it. I saw the inconceivable mystery of a soul that knew no restraint, no faith, and no fear, yet struggling blindly with itself. I kept my head pretty well; but when I had him at last stretched on the couch, I wiped my forehead, while my legs shook under me as though I had carried half a ton on my back down that hill. And yet I had only supported him, his bony arm clasped round my neck — and he was not much heavier than a child.

"When next day we left at noon, the crowd, of whose presence behind the curtain of trees I had been acutely conscious all the time, flowed out of the woods again, filled the clearing, covered the slope with a mass of naked, breathing, quivering, bronze bodies. I steamed up a bit, then swung down stream, and

two thousand eyes followed the evolutions of the splashing, thumping, fierce river-demon beating the water with its terrible tail and breathing black smoke into the air. In front of the first rank, along the river, three men, plastered with bright red earth from head to foot, strutted to and fro restlessly. When we came abreast again, they faced the river, stamped their feet, nodded their horned heads, swayed their scarlet bodies; they shook towards the fierce river-demon a bunch of black feathers, a mangy skin with a pendent tail — something that looked a dried gourd; they shouted periodically together strings of amazing words that resembled no sounds of human language; and the deep murmurs of the crowd, interrupted suddenly, were like the responses of some satanic litany.

"We had carried Kurtz into the pilot-house: there was more air there. Lying on the couch, he stared through the open shutter. There was an eddy in the mass of human bodies, and the woman with helmeted head and tawny cheeks rushed out to the very brink of the stream. She put out her hands, shouted something, and all that wild mob took up the shout in a roaring chorus of articulated, rapid, breathless utterance.

"'Do you understand this?' I asked.

"He kept on looking out past me with fiery, longing eyes, with a mingled expression of wistfulness and hate. He made no answer, but I saw a smile, a smile of indefinable meaning, appear on his colourless lips that a moment after twitched convulsively. 'Do I not?' he said slowly, gasping, as if the words had been torn out of him by a supernatural power.

"I pulled the string of the whistle, and I did this because I saw the pilgrims on deck getting out their rifles with an air of anticipating a jolly lark. At the sudden screech there was a movement of abject terror through that wedged mass of bodies. 'Don't! don't you frighten them away,' cried some one on deck disconsolately. I pulled the string time after time. They broke and ran, they leaped, they crouched, they swerved, they dodged the flying terror of the sound. The three red chaps had fallen flat, face down on the shore, as though they had been shot dead. Only the barbarous and superb woman did not so much as flinch, and stretched tragically her bare arms after us over the sombre and glittering river.

"And then that imbecile crowd down on the deck started their little fun, and I could see nothing more for smoke.

"The brown current ran swiftly out of the heart of darkness, bearing us down towards the sea with twice the speed of our upward progress; and Kurtz's life was running swiftly, too, ebbing, ebbing out of his heart into the sea of inexorable time. The manager was very placid, he had no vital anxieties now, he took us both in with a comprehensive and satisfied glance: the 'affair' had come off as well as could be wished. I saw the time approaching when I would be left alone of the party of 'unsound method.' The pilgrims looked upon me with disfavour. I was, so to speak, numbered with the dead. It is strange how I accepted this unforeseen partnership, this choice of nightmares forced upon me in the tenebrous land invaded by these mean and greedy phantoms.

"Kurtz discoursed. A voice! a voice! It rang deep to the very last. It survived his strength to hide in the magnificent folds of eloquence the barren darkness of his heart. Oh, he struggled! he struggled! The wastes of his weary brain were haunted by shadowy images now — images of wealth and fame revolving obsequiously round his unextinguishable gift of noble and lofty expression. My Intended, my station, my career, my ideas — these were the subjects for the occasional utterances of elevated sentiments. The shade of the original Kurtz frequented the bedside of the hollow sham, whose fate it was to be buried presently in the mould of primeval earth. But both the diabolic love and the unearthly hate of the mysteries it had penetrated fought for the possession of that soul satiated with primitive emotions, avid of lying fame, of sham distinction, of all the appearances of success and power.

"Sometimes he was contemptibly childish. He desired to have kings meet him at railway-stations on his return from some ghastly Nowhere, where he intended to accomplish great things. 'You show them you have in you something that is really profitable, and then there will be no limits to the recognition of

your ability,' he would say. 'Of course you must take care of the motives — right motives — always.' The long reaches that were like one and the same reach, monotonous bends that were exactly alike, slipped past the steamer with their multitude of secular trees looking patiently after this grimy fragment of another world, the forerunner of change, of conquest, of trade, of massacres, of blessings. I looked ahead — piloting. 'Close the shutter,' said Kurtz suddenly one day; 'I can't bear to look at this.' I did so. There was a silence. 'Oh, but I will wring your heart yet!' he cried at the invisible wilderness.

"We broke down — as I had expected — and had to lie up for repairs at the head of an island. This delay was the first thing that shook Kurtz's confidence. One morning he gave me a packet of papers and a photograph — the lot tied together with a shoe-string. 'Keep this for me,' he said. 'This noxious fool' (meaning the manager) 'is capable of prying into my boxes when I am not looking.' In the afternoon I saw him. He was lying on his back with closed eyes, and I withdrew quietly, but I heard him mutter, 'Live rightly, die, die . . .' I listened. There was nothing more. Was he rehearsing some speech in his sleep, or was it a fragment of a phrase from some newspaper article? He had been writing for the papers and meant to do so again, 'for the furthering of my ideas. It's a duty.'

"His was an impenetrable darkness. I looked at him as you peer down at a man who is lying at the bottom of a precipice where the sun never shines. But I had not much time to give him, because I was helping the engine-driver to take to pieces the leaky cylinders, to straighten a bent connecting-rod, and in other such matters. I lived in an infernal mess of rust, filings, nuts, bolts, spanners, hammers, ratchet-drills — things I abominate, because I don't get on with them. I tended the little forge we fortunately had aboard; I toiled wearily in a wretched scrap-heap — unless I had the shakes too bad to stand.

"One evening coming in with a candle I was startled to hear him say a little tremulously, 'I am lying here in the dark waiting for death.' The light was within a foot of his eyes. I forced myself to murmur, 'Oh, nonsense!' and stood over him as if transfixed.

"Anything approaching the change that came over his features I have never seen before, and hope never to see again. Oh, I wasn't touched. I was fascinated. It was as though a veil had been rent. I saw on that ivory face the expression of sombre pride, of ruthless power, of craven terror — of an intense and hopeless despair. Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision — he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath:

"'The horror! The horror!'

"I blew the candle out and left the cabin. The pilgrims were dining in the mess-room, and I took my place opposite the manager, who lifted his eyes to give me a questioning glance, which I successfully ignored. He leaned back, serene, with that peculiar smile of his sealing the unexpressed depths of his meanness. A continuous shower of small flies streamed upon the lamp, upon the cloth, upon our hands and faces. Suddenly the manager's boy put his insolent black head in the doorway, and said in a tone of scathing contempt:

"'Mistah Kurtz — he dead.'[4]

"All the pilgrims rushed out to see. I remained, and went on with my dinner. I believe I was considered brutally callous. However, I did not eat much. There was a lamp in there — light, don't you know — and outside it was so beastly, beastly dark. I went no more near the remarkable man who had pronounced a judgment upon the adventures of his soul on this earth. The voice was gone. What else had been there? But I am of course aware that next day the pilgrims buried something in a muddy hole.

"And then they very nearly buried me.[5]

"However, as you see, I did not go to join Kurtz there and then. I did not. I remained to dream the

4. cf. epigraph to T. S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men."

5. Conrad did return from the Congo, very ill with malaria, and was hospitalized for several months.

nightmare out to the end, and to show my loyalty to Kurtz once more. Destiny. My destiny! Droll thing life is — that mysterious arrangement of merciless logic for a futile purpose. The most you can hope from it is some knowledge of yourself — that comes too late — a crop of unextinguishable regrets. I have wrestled with death. It is the most unexciting contest you can imagine. It takes place in an impalpable greyness, with nothing underfoot, with nothing around, without spectators, without clamour, without glory, without the great desire of victory, without the great fear of defeat, in a sickly atmosphere of tepid scepticism, without much belief in your own right, and still less in that of your adversary. If such is the form of ultimate wisdom, then life is a greater riddle than some of us think it to be. I was within a hair's breadth of the last opportunity for pronouncement, and I found with humiliation that probably I would have nothing to say. This is the reason why I affirm that Kurtz was a remarkable man. He had something to say. He said it. Since I had peeped over the edge myself, I understand better the meaning of his stare, that could not see the flame of the candle, but was wide enough to embrace the whole universe, piercing enough to penetrate all the hearts that beat in the darkness. He had summed up — he had judged. 'The horror!' He was a remarkable man. After all, this was the expression of some sort of belief; it had candour, it had conviction, it had a vibrating note of revolt in its whisper, it had the appalling face of a glimpsed truth — the strange commingling of desire and hate. And it is not my own extremity I remember best — a vision of greyness without form filled with physical pain, and a careless contempt for the evanescence of all things — even of this pain itself. No! It is his extremity that I seem to have lived through. True, he had made that last stride, he had stepped over the edge, while I had been permitted to draw back my hesitating foot. And perhaps in this is the whole difference; perhaps all the wisdom, and all truth, and all sincerity, are just compressed into that inappreciable moment of time in which we step over the threshold of the invisible. Perhaps! I like to think my summing-up would not have been a word of careless contempt. Better his cry — much better. It was an affirmation, a moral victory paid for by innumerable defeats, by abominable terrors, by abominable satisfactions. But it was a victory! That is why I have remained loyal to Kurtz to the last, and even beyond, when a long time after I heard once more, not his own voice, but the echo of his magnificent eloquence thrown to me from a soul as translucently pure as a cliff of crystal.

"No, they did not bury me, though there is a period of time which I remember mistily, with a shuddering wonder, like a passage through some inconceivable world that had no hope in it and no desire. I found myself back in the sepulchral city resenting the sight of people hurrying through the streets to filch a little money from each other, to devour their infamous cookery, to gulp their unwholesome beer, to dream their insignificant and silly dreams. They trespassed upon my thoughts. They were intruders whose knowledge of life was to me an irritating pretence, because I felt so sure they could not possibly know the things I knew. Their bearing, which was simply the bearing of commonplace individuals going about their business in the assurance of perfect safety, was offensive to me like the outrageous flauntings of folly in the face of a danger it is unable to comprehend. I had no particular desire to enlighten them, but I had some difficulty in restraining myself from laughing in their faces so full of stupid importance. I daresay I was not very well at that time. I tottered about the streets — there were various affairs to settle — grinning bitterly at perfectly respectable persons. I admit my behaviour was inexcusable, but then my temperature was seldom normal in these days. My dear aunt's endeavours to 'nurse up my strength' seemed altogether beside the mark. It was not my strength that wanted nursing, it was my imagination that wanted soothing. I kept the bundle of papers given me by Kurtz, not knowing exactly what to do with it. His mother had died lately, watched over, as I was told, by his Intended. A clean-shaved man, with an official manner and wearing gold-rimmed spectacles, called on me one day and made inquiries, at first circuitous, afterwards suavely pressing, about what he was pleased to denominate certain 'documents.' I was not surprised, because I had had two rows with the manager on the subject out there. I had refused to give up the smallest scrap out of that package, and I took the

same attitude with the spectacled man. He became darkly menacing at last, and with much heat argued that the Company had the right to every bit of information about its 'territories.' And said he, 'Mr. Kurtz's knowledge of unexplored regions must have been necessarily extensive and peculiar — owing to his great abilities and to the deplorable circumstances in which he had been placed: therefore — ' I assured him Mr. Kurtz's knowledge, however extensive, did not bear upon the problems of commerce or administration. He invoked then the name of science. 'It would be an incalculable loss if,' etc., etc. I offered him the report on the 'Suppression of Savage Customs,' with the postscriptum torn off. He took it up eagerly, but ended by sniffing at it with an air of contempt. 'This is not what we had a right to expect,' he remarked. 'Expect nothing else,' I said. 'There are only private letters.' He withdrew upon some threat of legal proceedings, and I saw him no more; but another fellow, calling himself Kurtz's cousin, appeared two days later, and was anxious to hear all the details about his dear relative's last moments. Incidentally he gave me to understand that Kurtz had been essentially a great musician. 'There was the making of an immense success,' said the man, who was an organist, I believe, with lank grey hair flowing over a greasy coat-collar. I had no reason to doubt his statement; and to this day I am unable to say what was Kurtz's profession, whether he ever had any — which was the greatest of his talents. I had taken him for a painter who wrote for the papers, or else for a journalist who could paint — but even the cousin (who took snuff[6] during the interview) could not tell me what he had been — exactly. He was a universal genius — on that point I agreed with the old chap, who thereupon blew his nose noisily into a large cotton handkerchief and withdrew in senile agitation, bearing off some family letters and memoranda without importance. Ultimately a journalist anxious to know something of the fate of his 'dear colleague' turned up. This visitor informed me Kurtz's proper sphere ought to have been politics 'on the popular side.' He had furry straight eyebrows, bristly hair cropped short, an eyeglass on a broad ribbon, and, becoming expansive, confessed his opinion that Kurtz really couldn't write a bit — 'but heavens! how that man could talk. He electrified large meetings. He had faith — don't you see? — he had the faith. He could get himself to believe anything — anything. He would have been a splendid leader of an extreme party.' 'What party?' I asked. 'Any party,' answered the other. 'He was an — an — extremist.' Did I not think so? I assented. Did I know, he asked, with a sudden flash of curiosity, 'what it was that had induced him to go out there?' 'Yes,' said I, and forthwith handed him the famous Report for publication, if he thought fit. He glanced through it hurriedly, mumbling all the time, judged 'it would do,' and took himself off with this plunder.

"Thus I was left at last with a slim packet of letters and the girl's portrait. She struck me as beautiful — I mean she had a beautiful expression. I know that the sunlight can be made to lie, too, yet one felt that no manipulation of light and pose could have conveyed the delicate shade of truthfulness upon those features. She seemed ready to listen without mental reservation, without suspicion, without a thought for herself. I concluded I would go and give her back her portrait and those letters myself. Curiosity? Yes; and also some other feeling perhaps. All that had been Kurtz's had passed out of my hands: his soul, his body, his station, his plans, his ivory, his career. There remained only his memory and his Intended — and I wanted to give that up, too, to the past, in a way — to surrender personally all that remained of him with me to that oblivion which is the last word of our common fate. I don't defend myself. I had no clear perception of what it was I really wanted. Perhaps it was an impulse of unconscious loyalty, or the fulfilment of one of those ironic necessities that lurk in the facts of human existence. I don't know. I can't tell. But I went.

"I thought his memory was like the other memories of the dead that accumulate in every man's life — a vague impress on the brain of shadows that had fallen on it in their swift and final passage; but before the high and ponderous door, between the tall houses of a street as still and decorous as a well-kept alley

6. Crushed tobacco, inhaled through nostrils rather than smoked.

in a cemetery, I had a vision of him on the stretcher, opening his mouth voraciously, as if to devour all the earth with all its mankind. He lived then before me; he lived as much as he had ever lived — a shadow insatiable of splendid appearances, of frightful realities; a shadow darker than the shadow of the night, and draped nobly in the folds of a gorgeous eloquence. The vision seemed to enter the house with me — the stretcher, the phantom-bearers, the wild crowd of obedient worshippers, the gloom of the forests, the glitter of the reach between the murky bends, the beat of the drum, regular and muffled like the beating of a heart — the heart of a conquering darkness. It was a moment of triumph for the wilderness, an invading and vengeful rush which, it seemed to me, I would have to keep back alone for the salvation of another soul. And the memory of what I had heard him say afar there, with the horned shapes stirring at my back, in the glow of fires, within the patient woods, those broken phrases came back to me, were heard again in their ominous and terrifying simplicity. I remembered his abject pleading, his abject threats, the colossal scale of his vile desires, the meanness, the torment, the tempestuous anguish of his soul. And later on I seemed to see his collected languid manner, when he said one day, 'This lot of ivory now is really mine. The Company did not pay for it. I collected it myself at a very great personal risk. I am afraid they will try to claim it as theirs though. H'm. It is a difficult case. What do you think I ought to do — resist? Eh? I want no more than justice.' . . . He wanted no more than justice — no more than justice. I rang the bell before a mahogany door on the first floor, and while I waited he seemed to stare at me out of the glassy panel — stare with that wide and immense stare embracing, condemning, loathing all the universe. I seemed to hear the whispered cry, "The horror! The horror!"

"The dusk was falling. I had to wait in a lofty drawing-room with three long windows from floor to ceiling that were like three luminous and bedraped columns. The bent gilt legs and backs of the furniture shone in indistinct curves. The tall marble fireplace had a cold and monumental whiteness. A grand piano stood massively in a corner; with dark gleams on the flat surfaces like a sombre and polished sarcophagus. A high door opened — closed. I rose.

"She came forward, all in black, with a pale head, floating towards me in the dusk. She was in mourning. It was more than a year since his death, more than a year since the news came; she seemed as though she would remember and mourn forever. She took both my hands in hers and murmured, 'I had heard you were coming.' I noticed she was not very young — I mean not girlish. She had a mature capacity for fidelity, for belief, for suffering. The room seemed to have grown darker, as if all the sad light of the cloudy evening had taken refuge on her forehead. This fair hair, this pale visage, this pure brow, seemed surrounded by an ashy halo from which the dark eyes looked out at me. Their glance was guileless, profound, confident, and trustful. She carried her sorrowful head as though she were proud of that sorrow, as though she would say, 'I — I alone know how to mourn for him as he deserves.' But while we were still shaking hands, such a look of awful desolation came upon her face that I perceived she was one of those creatures that are not the playthings of Time. For her he had died only yesterday. And, by Jove! the impression was so powerful that for me, too, he seemed to have died only yesterday — nay, this very minute. I saw her and him in the same instant of time — his death and her sorrow — I saw her sorrow in the very moment of his death. Do you understand? I saw them together — I heard them together. She had said, with a deep catch of the breath, 'I have survived' while my strained ears seemed to hear distinctly, mingled with her tone of despairing regret, the summing up whisper of his eternal condemnation. I asked myself what I was doing there, with a sensation of panic in my heart as though I had blundered into a place of cruel and absurd mysteries not fit for a human being to behold. She motioned me to a chair. We sat down. I laid the packet gently on the little table, and she put her hand over it. . . . 'You knew him well,' she murmured, after a moment of mourning silence.

"'Intimacy grows quickly out there,' I said. 'I knew him as well as it is possible for one man to know another.'

"'And you admired him,' she said. 'It was impossible to know him and not to admire him. Was it?'

"'He was a remarkable man,' I said, unsteadily. Then before the appealing fixity of her gaze, that seemed to watch for more words on my lips, I went on, 'It was impossible not to — '

"'Love him,' she finished eagerly, silencing me into an appalled dumbness. 'How true! how true! But when you think that no one knew him so well as I! I had all his noble confidence. I knew him best.'

"'You knew him best,' I repeated. And perhaps she did. But with every word spoken the room was growing darker, and only her forehead, smooth and white, remained illumined by the inextinguishable light of belief and love.

"'You were his friend,' she went on. 'His friend,' she repeated, a little louder. 'You must have been, if he had given you this, and sent you to me. I feel I can speak to you — and oh! I must speak. I want you — you who have heard his last words — to know I have been worthy of him. . . . It is not pride. . . . Yes! I am proud to know I understood him better than any one on earth — he told me so himself. And since his mother died I have had no one — no one — to — to — '

"I listened. The darkness deepened. I was not even sure whether he had given me the right bundle. I rather suspect he wanted me to take care of another batch of his papers which, after his death, I saw the manager examining under the lamp. And the girl talked, easing her pain in the certitude of my sympathy; she talked as thirsty men drink. I had heard that her engagement with Kurtz had been disapproved by her people. He wasn't rich enough or something. And indeed I don't know whether he had not been a pauper all his life. He had given me some reason to infer that it was his impatience of comparative poverty that drove him out there.

"'. . . Who was not his friend who had heard him speak once?' she was saying. 'He drew men towards him by what was best in them.' She looked at me with intensity. 'It is the gift of the great,' she went on, and the sound of her low voice seemed to have the accompaniment of all the other sounds, full of mystery, desolation, and sorrow, I had ever heard — the ripple of the river, the soughing of the trees swayed by the wind, the murmurs of the crowds, the faint ring of incomprehensible words cried from afar, the whisper of a voice speaking from beyond the threshold of an eternal darkness. 'But you have heard him! You know!' she cried.

"'Yes, I know,' I said with something like despair in my heart, but bowing my head before the faith that was in her, before that great and saving illusion that shone with an unearthly glow in the darkness, in the triumphant darkness from which I could not have defended her — from which I could not even defend myself.

"'What a loss to me — to us!' — she corrected herself with beautiful generosity; then added in a murmur, 'To the world.' By the last gleams of twilight I could see the glitter of her eyes, full of tears — of tears that would not fall.

"'I have been very happy — very fortunate — very proud,' she went on. 'Too fortunate. Too happy for a little while. And now I am unhappy for — for life.'

"She stood up; her fair hair seemed to catch all the remaining light in a glimmer of gold. I rose, too.

"'And of all this,' she went on mournfully, 'of all his promise, and of all his greatness, of his generous mind, of his noble heart, nothing remains — nothing but a memory. You and I — '

"'We shall always remember him,' I said hastily.

"'No!' she cried. 'It is impossible that all this should be lost — that such a life should be sacrificed to leave nothing — but sorrow. You know what vast plans he had. I knew of them, too — I could not perhaps understand — but others knew of them. Something must remain. His words, at least, have not died.'

"'His words will remain,' I said.

"'And his example,' she whispered to herself. 'Men looked up to him — his goodness shone in every act. His example — '

"'True,' I said; 'his example, too. Yes, his example. I forgot that.'

"But I do not. I cannot — I cannot believe — not yet. I cannot believe that I shall never see him again, that no-body will see him again, never, never, never.'

"She put out her arms as if after a retreating figure, stretching them back and with clasped pale hands across the fading and narrow sheen of the window. Never see him! I saw him clearly enough then. I shall see this eloquent phantom as long as I live, and I shall see her, too, a tragic and familiar Shade[7], resembling in this gesture another one, tragic also, and bedecked with powerless charms, stretching bare brown arms over the glitter of the infernal stream, the stream of darkness. She said suddenly very low, 'He died as he lived.'

"'His end,' said I, with dull anger stirring in me, 'was in every way worthy of his life.'

"'And I was not with him,' she murmured. My anger subsided before a feeling of infinite pity.

"'Everything that could be done — ' I mumbled.

"'Ah, but I believed in him more than any one on earth — more than his own mother, more than — himself. He needed me! Me! I would have treasured every sigh, every word, every sign, every glance.'

"I felt like a chill grip on my chest. 'Don't,' I said, in a muffled voice.

"'Forgive me. I — I have mourned so long in silence — in silence. . . . You were with him — to the last? I think of his loneliness. Nobody near to understand him as I would have understood. Perhaps no one to hear. . . .'

"'To the very end,' I said, shakily. 'I heard his very last words. . . .' I stopped in a fright.

"'Repeat them,' she murmured in a heart-broken tone. 'I want — I want — something — something — to — to live with.'

"I was on the point of crying at her, 'Don't you hear them?' The dusk was repeating them in a persistent whisper all around us, in a whisper that seemed to swell menacingly like the first whisper of a rising wind. 'The horror! The horror!'

"'His last word — to live with,' she insisted. 'Don't you understand I loved him — I loved him — I loved him!'

"I pulled myself together and spoke slowly.

"'The last word he pronounced was — your name.'

"I heard a light sigh and then my heart stood still, stopped dead short by an exulting and terrible cry, by the cry of inconceivable triumph and of unspeakable pain. 'I knew it — I was sure!' . . . She knew. She was sure. I heard her weeping; she had hidden her face in her hands. It seemed to me that the house would collapse before I could escape, that the heavens would fall upon my head. But nothing happened. The heavens do not fall for such a trifle. Would they have fallen, I wonder, if I had rendered Kurtz that justice which was his due? Hadn't he said he wanted only justice? But I couldn't. I could not tell her. It would have been too dark — too dark altogether. . . ."

Marlow ceased, and sat apart, indistinct and silent, in the pose of a meditating Buddha. Nobody moved for a time. "We have lost the first of the ebb," said the Director suddenly. I raised my head. The offing was barred by a black bank of clouds, and the tranquil waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth flowed sombre under an overcast sky — seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness.

7. A spirit or a ghost.

93.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

1. What is irony (cf. Glossary)? Find three examples of irony in *Heart of Darkness*. Explain how and what each example adds to the meaning of the story.
2. Find three examples of symbolism (cf. Glossary) in the novella and explain the symbolic significance of these objects or entities.
3. To whom does Marlow tell his story, why does he tell his story to these men, and what does he want these men to learn from his account of his experience in the Congo?
4. Compare and contrast the River Thames with the Congo River, as Conrad describes them in the novella.
5. Compare and contrast Kurtz's fiancée with the African woman who does not want Kurtz to leave the Inner Station.
6. What does Marlow learn about human nature and about colonialism as a result of his voyage up the Congo River to rescue Kurtz?
7. Explain the meaning of the story's iconic line, Kurtz's dying words, "The horror! The horror!"

Writing Assignments

1. Do you agree with the critics who claim that *Heart of Darkness* is a racist and a sexist work? Support your response.
2. How does Conrad's use of imagery and symbolism in *Heart of Darkness* augment the themes of the story?
3. Explain and describe the historical and biographical context that helps readers understand and appreciate *Heart of Darkness*.
4. Compare and contrast *Heart of Darkness* with *Apocalypse Now*, Francis Ford Coppola's film adaptation of the book.

Resources

Appendix 3: Heart of Darkness Mini Casebook

XIII

William Butler Yeats (1865–1939)

94.

Biography



Figure 1: William Butler Yeats

William Butler Yeats was born on June 13, 1865, in Dublin, Ireland. His father, John, was a lawyer, but an artist at heart, and he left his law practice to become a portrait painter. His mother was Susan Pollexfen, whose family had prosperous business interests in milling and shipbuilding in Sligo, on Ireland's northwest coast.

In search of commissions, Yeats's father moved the family to London, which set a pattern for the rest of Yeats's life as he would move regularly between Dublin to London, summering in Sligo when he was a child, and at his friend Lady Gregory's estate Coole Park when he was an adult, rarely settling in one place for long, even after he married and raised a family.

Yeats attended high schools in both London and Dublin. College was two years—1883 to 1885—at Dublin's Metropolitan School of Art (now the prestigious National College of Art and Design), an

obvious choice for a young man from one of Ireland's famously artistic families: his brother Jack would become a renowned painter; one of his sisters was an art teacher; and the other an accomplished designer, a protégé of the great William Morris, in whose studio she worked.

But Yeats soon recognized that poetry was his true calling. He established himself as a man of letters, and, for the next 50-plus years of his life, he worked tirelessly as a poet, playwright, and literary critic. Three themes dominate his work: his determination to use his gift in the interest of revitalizing Irish culture, his personal search for a spiritual identity, and his unrequited love for Maud Gonne.

Maud was the daughter of a British army officer but, raised in Ireland, she adopted the cause of Irish independence and became a leading spokesperson for the movement. From the day they met in 1889, she and Yeats were lifelong friends. She attended meetings of the mystical occult societies Yeats was always drawn to, and he attended her political rallies. A trained and gifted actress, she took the lead in his 1902 play *Kathleen ni Houlihan*. She broke his heart at least twice, first when she confessed to him that her two children (a son, Georges, who died as an infant, and a daughter, Iseult) were not, as she had claimed, adopted, but her natural children with a Paris journalist, married and much older than she. Some years later, she married John McBride, a major in the Irish Republican Army. Even after Yeats married in 1921 and had his own family, he references in his poetry his unrequited love for Maud. Among the poems we anthologize here, Maud appears in "No Second Troy," "Easter 1916," and "A Prayer for My Daughter."

"The Second Coming," "Leda and the Swan," "Among School Children," "Sailing to Byzantium," and "Byzantium" touch on Yeats's interest in discovering and promoting a system of spiritual enlightenment, which would explain the cycles of history, death and reincarnation, and the relationship of the mind and body to the spirit. For much of his life, Yeats was drawn to and took an active role in mystical and occult societies, such as the Order of the Golden Dawn. His wife, George, claimed the gift of automatic writing, the ability to write down information the spirit world dictated to her, and Yeats would claim that much of his philosophical work, *A Vision*, published in 1926, was based upon information he acquired from the spirit world, which spoke to him through George.

Yeats also used his work to promote the cause of Irish independence, his contribution being a determined effort to forge a distinctly Irish culture, especially a literature. His work as a playwright, though less successful than his poetry, occupied much of his energy throughout his life. He not only wrote but helped to produce the plays of others: J. M. Synge and, later, Sean O'Casey were the best of the playwrights whose work Yeats promoted. With the tireless help from his friend Lady Augusta Gregory, he founded the Irish Literary Theatre, which became the Abbey Theatre in 1904 and which thrives to this day.

As the years went by, Yeats's fame and status as Ireland's leading man of letters grew. He won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1923, and he became a senator in the Irish Free State after Ireland won conditional independence from Great Britain. He continued to produce astonishing poetry. His last poems, represented here by "The Circus Animal's Desertion," reveal a diminished interest in the search for a utopian vision of spiritual enlightenment that Byzantium represented for him. Instead, he writes of his need to re-immerse himself in the real world of his politically unstable nation and in the pains that love sometimes entails, "the foul rag and bone shop of the heart."

Typically energetic to the end, Yeats was still writing new poems at the time of his death, in France, on January 28, 1939.

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95.

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

William Butler Yeats

[1]

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles[2] made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.
And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.
I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.
— 1892.

1. Innisfree is a small island in the middle of Lough (Lake) Gill, near Sligo, the town in the northwest of Ireland, where Yeats spent many happy summers, holidaying with his mother's family. He was living in London in 1888 when he wrote the poem. The poem expresses the universal desire to "get away from it all," to retreat from a busy life in the city and find a quiet haven, surrounded by nature's beauty. Though one of his most famous poems, he, ironically, grew weary of reciting it at his lectures, so often was it requested.
2. Thin branches woven together.

96.

No Second Troy

William Butler Yeats

Why should I blame her[1] that she filled my days
With misery[2], or that she would of late
Have taught to ignorant men most violent ways,
Or hurled the little streets upon the great.
Had they but courage equal to desire?
What could have made her peaceful with a mind
That nobleness made simple as a fire,
With beauty like a tightened bow, a kind
That is not natural in an age like this,
Being high and solitary and most stern?
Why, what could she have done, being what she is?
Was there another Troy for her to burn?
— 1910.

1. Maud Gonne, the beautiful Irish revolutionary leader, whom Yeats loved for much of his life. She was to him the reincarnation of Helen of Troy, in the ancient world a major trading port in what is now Turkey. Helen was so beautiful, she was abducted by the Trojan Paris, and her husband, Menelaus, King of the Greek city of Sparta, attacked Troy to get her back.
2. Yeats proposed to Maud, but she admitted to him she had two children with a married French journalist. Later, she married John MacBride, a major in the Irish Republican Army, a man Yeats despised. (cf. "Easter, 1916").

97.

Easter, 1916

William Butler Yeats

[1]

I have met them at close of day
Coming with vivid faces
From counter or desk among grey
Eighteenth-century houses.
I have passed with a nod of the head
Or polite meaningless words,
Or have lingered awhile and said
Polite meaningless words,
And thought before I had done
Of a mocking tale or a gibe
To please a companion
Around the fire at the club,
Being certain that they and I
But lived where motley[2] is worn:
All changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.
That woman's[3] days were spent
In ignorant good-will,
Her nights in argument
Until her voice grew shrill.
What voice more sweet than hers
When, young and beautiful,
She rode to harriers?
This man[4] had kept a school
And rode our winged horse[5];

1. On Easter Monday, April 24, 1916, a paramilitary group of Irish republicans occupied central Dublin and proclaimed Ireland independent of Great Britain. The British government regained control within the week, and, ultimately charged the republican leaders with treason. They were tried quickly and executed, compounding rather than solving the problem, in that many moderate republicans were outraged and radicalized. Yeats was among them. His bewildered new perspective is expressed in the poem's famous refrain, "A terrible beauty is born." He knew many of the revolutionary leaders, including Maud Gonne's estranged husband whom he despised, as "A drunken vainglorious lout," but whom he nevertheless acknowledges in this poem.
2. Colourful, often ragged clothing worn by a court jester.
3. Constance Gore-Booth (1868-1927), the only woman among the revolutionary and the only one spared execution, sentenced instead to a long prison sentence, later commuted.
4. Padraic Pearse (1879-1916), a teacher and a poet.
5. Pegasus, the winged horse, upon whom rode the poets' muse.

This other his helper and friend[6]
Was coming into his force;
He might have won fame in the end,
So sensitive his nature seemed,
So daring and sweet his thought.
This other man I had dreamed
A drunken, vainglorious lout[7].
He had done most bitter wrong
To some who are near my heart,
Yet I number him in the song;
He, too, has resigned his part
In the casual comedy;
He, too, has been changed in his turn,
Transformed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.
    Hearts with one purpose alone
Through summer and winter seem
Enchanted to a stone
To trouble the living stream.
The horse that comes from the road.
The rider, the birds that range
From cloud to tumbling cloud,
Minute by minute they change;
A shadow of cloud on the stream
Changes minute by minute;
A horse-hoof slides on the brim,
And a horse plashes within it;
The long-legged moor-hens dive,
And hens to moor-cocks call;
Minute by minute they live:
The stone's in the midst of all.
    Too long a sacrifice
Can make a stone of the heart.
O when may it suffice?
That is Heaven's part, our part
To murmur name upon name,
As a mother names her child
When sleep at last has come
On limbs that had run wild.
What is it but nightfall?
No, no, not night but death;
Was it needless death after all?
For England may keep faith[8]
For all that is done and said.

6. Thomas MacDonagh (1878-1916), Yeats's fellow poet and dramatist.
7. John MacBride, Irish Republican Army major, whom Yeats despised because he had married and abused Maud before she left him.
8. That is, may grant independence to Ireland, as Britain finally did in 1921.

We know their dream; enough
To know they dreamed and are dead;
And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?
I write it out in a verse —
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly[9] and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.
— 1921

9. James Connolly (1870-1916), prominent trade unionist, one of the rebellion's paramilitary commanders.

98.

The Wild Swans at Coole

William Butler Yeats

[1]

The trees are in their autumn beauty,
The woodland paths are dry,
Under the October twilight the water
Mirrors a still sky;
Upon the brimming water among the stones
Are nine-and-fifty swans.
The nineteenth autumn has come upon me
Since I first made my count;
I saw, before I had well finished,
All suddenly mount
And scatter wheeling in great broken rings
Upon their clamorous wings.
I have looked upon those brilliant creatures,
And now my heart is sore.
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,
The first time on this shore,
The bell-beat of their wings above my head,
Trod with a lighter tread.
Unwearied still, lover by lover,
They paddle in the cold
Companionable streams or climb the air;
Their hearts have not grown old;
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
Attend upon them still.
But now they drift on the still water,
Mysterious, beautiful;
Among what rushes will they build,
By what lake's edge or pool
Delight men's eyes when I awake some day
To find they have flown away?
— 1919

1. Coole Park was the name of the estate which belonged to Yeats's dear friend, Lady Augusta Gregory, co-author of at least one of his plays and partner with him in the management of the Abbey Theatre. For years—the "nineteenth autumn" in this poem—Yeats was a house guest at Coole Park. The estate included a small lake, where lived the "nine-and-fifty swans" he describes here.

99.

The Second Coming

William Butler Yeats

[1]

Turning and turning in the widening gyre[2]
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.
Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*[3]
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,[4]
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep[5]
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,[6]
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem[7] to be born?
— 1921

1. The second coming of Jesus Christ—whom Yeats envisions here as an anti-Christ—on Judgment Day.
2. A spiral that continues to widen until it collapses. The gyre is Yeats's symbol of a civilization spiraling out of control, at the end of its 2,000-year cycle.
3. The spirit of the world. Similar to Carl Jung's notion of the collective unconscious, it is a storehouse of knowledge shared by all; here, knowledge of a saviour or demon.
4. The anti-Christ, similar to the Beast of the Apocalypse, described in the "Book of Revelation" in the Christian Bible.
5. The 2,000 years before the birth of Christ.
6. Wherein lay the baby Jesus.
7. Town in the Middle East, famous as the birthplace of Jesus.

100.

A Prayer for My Daughter

William Butler Yeats

[1]

Once more the storm is howling, and half hid
Under this cradle-hood and coverlid
My child sleeps on. There is no obstacle
But Gregory's wood[2] and one bare hill
Whereby the haystack- and roof-levelling wind.
Bred on the Atlantic, can be stayed;
And for an hour I have walked and prayed
Because of the great gloom that is in my mind.
I have walked and prayed for this young child an hour
And heard the sea-wind scream upon the tower,
And-under the arches of the bridge, and scream
In the elms above the flooded stream;
Imagining in excited reverie
That the future years had come,
Dancing to a frenzied drum,
Out of the murderous innocence of the sea.
May she be granted beauty and yet not
Beauty to make a stranger's eye distraught,
Or hers before a looking-glass, for such,
Being made beautiful overmuch,
Consider beauty a sufficient end,
Lose natural kindness and maybe
The heart-revealing intimacy
That chooses right, and never find a friend.
Helen[3] being chosen found life flat and dull
And later had much trouble from a fool,
While that great Queen,[4] that rose out of the spray,
Being fatherless could have her way
Yet chose a bandy-legged smith[5] for man.

1. Yeats was 54 when his first child, a daughter Ann, was born on February 26, 1919. An artist, she never married and died in 2001. Yeats's son, two years younger, was an Irish politician. He died in 2007, survived by three daughters and a son.
2. On Lady Gregory's property (cf. "The Wild Swans at Coole"), and near the ancient Norman tower, Thoor Ballylee, in Galway, which Yeats renovated, and where he lived, on and off, from his marriage in 1917 until his death.
3. See "No Second Troy," note 1.
4. Venus, the goddess of love.
5. Vulcan, lame; i.e., bandy-legged, blacksmith to the gods.

It's certain that fine women[6] eat
A crazy salad with their meat
Whereby the Horn of plenty[7] is undone.
  In courtesy I'd have her chiefly learned;
Hearts are not had as a gift but hearts are earned
By those that are not entirely beautiful;
Yet many, that have played the fool
For beauty's very self, has charm made wise.
And many a poor man that has roved,
Loved and thought himself beloved,
From a glad kindness cannot take his eyes.
  May she become a flourishing hidden tree
That all her thoughts may like the linnet be,
And have no business but dispensing round
Their magnanimities of sound,
Nor but in merriment begin a chase,
Nor but in merriment a quarrel.
O may she live like some green laurel
Rooted in one dear perpetual place.
  My mind, because the minds that I have loved,
The sort of beauty that I have approved,
Prosper but little, has dried up of late,
Yet knows that to be choked with hate
May well be of all evil chances chief.
If there's no hatred in a mind
Assault and battery of the wind
Can never tear the linnet from the leaf.
  An intellectual hatred is the worst,
So let her think opinions are accursed.
Have I not seen the loveliest woman[8] born
Out of the mouth of plenty's horn,
Because of her opinionated mind
Barter that horn and every good
By quiet natures understood
For an old bellows full of angry wind?
  Considering that, all hatred driven hence,
The soul recovers radical innocence
And learns at last that it is self-delighting,
Self-appeasing, self-affrighting,
And that its own sweet will is Heaven's will;
She can, though every face should scowl
And every windy quarter howl
Or every bellows burst, be happy still.

6. Yeats is likely thinking of Maud Gonne, who married a man vastly inferior, in Yeats's opinion, to him.
7. In Greek myth, the horn of the goat that suckled the chief of the gods, Zeus, filling Zeus with nectar and ambrosia; hence, the horn of plenty is a symbol of abundance, "plenty."
8. Maud Gonne again.

And may her bridegroom bring her to a house
Where all's accustomed, ceremonious;
For arrogance and hatred are the wares
Peddled in the thoroughfares.
How but in custom and in ceremony
Are innocence and beauty born?
Ceremony's a name for the rich horn,
And custom for the spreading laurel tree.
—1921

101.

Leda and the Swan

William Butler Yeats

[1]

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.
How can those terrified vague fingers push
The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
And how can body, laid in that white rush,
But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?
A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower[2]
And Agamemnon dead.
Being so caught up,
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?
— 1928

1. Leda was the queen of the Greek city state, Sparta; the Swan was Zeus, supreme god of Greek mythology. According to the myth that inspired this sonnet, Zeus came to Leda in the form of a swan and raped her. Nine months later, Leda gave birth to two girls. Helen would precipitate the Trojan War when she ran off with the Trojan prince, Paris, escaping from her Greek husband Menelaus. Clytemnestra would marry and murder Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek army and the brother of Menelaus. Leda also gave birth to two boys: Castor and Pollux.
2. References events of the Trojan War.

102.

Sailing to Byzantium

William Butler Yeats

[1]

I
That[2] is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees
— Those dying generations — at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.
II
An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing,[3] and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence;
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium.
III
O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,[4]
And be the singing-masters of my soul.
Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.

1. In *A Vision*, the book wherein he outlines his personal philosophy, Yeats identified sixth-century Byzantium (present-day Istanbul in Turkey) as his idea of Utopia. The unity of purpose among citizens from all walks of life to create a city that revealed their reverence for art, poetry, music, and architecture was, for Yeats, a model all nations, especially Ireland, should follow.
2. Ireland.
3. One of Yeats's favourite poets was William Blake (1757-1827), who claimed he saw the soul of a brother who had just died, rise out of his body and ascend to heaven, clapping its hands for joy as it did so. Here Yeats says old age is "a paltry thing" unless we can renew our spirit.
4. To "perne" means to spin; the gyre is the ever-widening spiral, Yeats's favourite symbol of the progress of life and civilization. The "sages" on the Byzantium mosaics approach the poet in this manner to symbolize his spiritual rebirth.

IV
Once out Of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling[5]
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.
— 1928

5. In Yeats's own note to this poem, he references the golden mechanical birds which sat in a tree in the emperor's palace in Byzantium and sang. Yeats wants to be reincarnated as one of these birds, to end the cycle of birth and rebirth, once he is "Out of nature." The singing echoes his own profession as a poet.

103.

Among School Children

William Butler Yeats

I
I walk through the long schoolroom questioning;
A kind old nun in a white hood replies;
The children learn to cipher and to sing,
To study reading-books and histories,
To cut and sew, be neat in everything
In the best modern way — the children's eyes
In momentary wonder stare upon
A sixty-year-old smiling public man.[1]
II
I dream of a Ledaean[2] body, bent
Above a sinking fire, a tale that she
Told of a harsh reproof, or trivial event
That changed some childish day to tragedy —
Told, and it seemed that our two natures blent
Into a sphere from youthful sympathy,
Or else, to alter Plato's[3] parable,
Into the yolk and white of the one shell.
III
And thinking of that fit of grief or rage
I look upon one child or t'other there
And wonder if she stood so at that age —
For even daughters of the swan can share
Something of every paddler's heritage —
And had that colour upon cheek or hair,
And thereupon my heart is driven wild:
She stands before me as a living child.
IV
Her present image floats into the mind —
Did Quattrocento[4] finger fashion it

1. Yeats was a politician when he wrote the poem, a senator in the Irish Free State. The inspiration for this poem was an official visit he made to a school in Waterford in 1926.
2. Maud Gonne, who was to Yeats the reincarnation of Helen of Troy, the "Ledaean body," in that her mother was Leda. See notes to "Leda and the Swan."
3. The reference is to Greek philosopher Plato's *Symposium*, the parable being that the primitive human was spherical, like an egg, divided in the process of evolution. Love is the desire to form the sphere again.
4. Some 15th-century ("Quattrocento") Italian painters painted women in the anorexic way Maud now appears to Yeats.

Hollow of cheek as though it drank the wind
And took a mess of shadows for its meat?
And I though never of Ledaean kind
Had pretty plumage once — enough of that,
Better to smile on all that smile, and show
There is a comfortable kind of old scarecrow.

V

What youthful mother, a shape upon her lap
Honey of generation[5] had betrayed,
And that must sleep, shriek, struggle to escape
As recollection or the drug decide,
Would think her Son, did she but see that shape
With sixty or more winters on its head,
A compensation for the pang of his birth,
Or the uncertainty of his setting forth?

VI

Plato thought nature but a spume[6] that plays
Upon a ghostly paradigm of things;
Solider Aristotle[7] played the taws
Upon the bottom of a king of kings;[8]
World-famous golden-thighed Pythagoras[9]
Fingered upon a fiddle-stick or strings
What a star sang and careless Muses heard:
Old clothes upon old sticks to scare a bird.

VII

Both nuns and mothers worship images,
But those the candles light are not as those
That animate a mother's reveries,
But keep a marble or a bronze repose.
And yet they too break hearts — O presences
That passion, piety or affection knows,
And that all heavenly glory symbolise —
O self-born mockers of man's enterprise;

VIII

Labour is blossoming or dancing where
The body is not bruised to pleasure soul.
Nor beauty born out of its own despair,
Nor blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil.

5. The neo-Platonic philosopher, Porphyry, believed that an ambrosia, honey-like drug was released at birth, and if the infant tasted it, he or she would forget about the bliss of prenatal happiness; but if he or she did not taste it, the infant would be condemned to a sad life because he or she would always search for the unattainable happiness of a previous life.
6. Froth; insubstantial matter, in contrast, in Plato's view, to a real substantial ideal world, a "paradigm of things."
7. Aristotle was "solider" in that he believed the physical world we experience is the real world, not the "spume" Plato believed it was.
8. Alexander the Great (356 – 323 BC), leader of the Greek confederation, student of Aristotle who strapped him, "played the taws," when he needed discipline.
9. Greek philosopher, venerated by his followers who thought he had a golden thigh, the sign of a god. He believed that the beauty of music reflected a universal harmony.

O chestnut-tree, great-rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole[10]?
O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?
— 1928

10. Stem or trunk.

104.

Byzantium

William Butler Yeats

[1]

The unpurged images of day recede;
The Emperor's drunken soldiery are abed;
Night resonance recedes, night walkers' song
After great cathedral gong;
A starlit or a moonlit dome[2] disdains
All that man is,
All mere complexities,
The fury and the mire of human veins.
Before me floats an image, man or shade,
Shade more than man, more image than a shade;
For Hades' bobbin bound in mummy-cloth
May unwind the winding path;[3]
A mouth that has no moisture and no breath
Breathless mouths may summon;
I hail the superhuman;
I call it death-in-life and life-in-death.
Miracle, bird or golden handiwork,
More miracle than bird or handiwork,
Planted on the star-lit golden bough,
Can like the cocks of Hades crow,[4]
Or, by the moon embittered, scorn aloud
In glory of changeless metal
Common bird or petal
And all complexities of mire or blood.
At midnight on the Emperor's pavement flit
Flames that no faggot[5] feeds, nor steel has lit,
Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame,
Where blood-begotten spirits come

1. In "Sailing to Byzantium," written four years earlier in 1926, Yeats expresses his desire to be reincarnated as a work of art, a golden bird, living in sixth-century Byzantium (now Istanbul), his ideal city. In this poem, he imagines he has achieved his dream, and he watches as other souls are purified.
2. Of the sprawling Greek Orthodox basilica, St. Sophia (now a museum).
3. After death, when the soul is in Hades (the underworld), the bobbin or spool or gyre of life may unwind, in preparation to enter the realm of pure spirit.
4. To announce a reincarnation.
5. A bundle of sticks tied together, used to fuel fire.

And all complexities of fury leave,
Dying into a dance,
An agony of trance,
An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve.[6]
Astraddle on the dolphin's mire and blood,
Spirit after Spirit! The smithies break the flood.
The golden smithies of the Emperor![7]
Marbles of the dancing floor
Break bitter furies of complexity,
Those images that yet
Fresh images beget,
That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented[8] sea.
— 1933

6. Here Yeats describes the ritual process whereby the mortal soul is purified to render it immortal.
7. Overwhelmed by the number of sprits who come on the backs of dolphins, which in Greek mythology carried souls to the Isles of the Blessed, the goldsmiths call a halt to the purification process, unable to accommodate any more, for now.
8. From the ringing of the gong, the funeral bell.

105.

Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop

William Butler Yeats

[1]

I met the Bishop on the road
And much said he and I.
'Those breasts are flat and fallen now,
Those veins must soon be dry;
Live in a heavenly mansion,
Not in some foul sty.'
'Fair and foul are near of kin,
And fair needs foul,' I cried.
'My friends are gone, but that's a truth
Nor grave nor bed denied,
Learned in bodily lowliness
And in the heart's pride.
'A woman can be proud and stiff
When on love intent;
But Love has pitched his mansion in
The place of excrement;
For nothing can be sole or whole
That has not been rent.'
— 1932

1. Between 1929 and 1932, Yeats wrote seven poems featuring the wisdom of an old peasant woman who lived in Galway.

106.

The Circus Animals' Desertion

William Butler Yeats

I
I sought a theme and sought for it in vain,
I sought it daily for six weeks or so.
Maybe at last, being but a broken man,
I must be satisfied with my heart, although
Winter and summer till old age began
My circus animals were all on show,
Those stilted boys, that burnished chariot,
Lion and woman and the Lord knows what.
II
What can I but enumerate old themes?
First that sea-rider Oisin[1] led by the nose
Through three enchanted islands, allegorical dreams,
Vain gaiety, vain battle, vain repose,
Themes of the embittered heart, or so it seems,
That might adorn old songs or courtly shows;
But what cared I that set him on to ride,
I, starved for the bosom of his faery bride?
And then a counter-truth filled out its play,
'The Countess Cathleen' was the name I gave it;
She, pity-crazed, had given her soul away,
But masterful Heaven had intervened to save it.
I thought my dear[2] must her own soul destroy,
So did fanaticism and hate enslave it,
And this brought forth a dream and soon enough
This dream itself had all my thought and love.
And when the Fool and Blind Man stole the bread
Cuchulain[3] fought the ungovernable sea;
Heart-mysteries there, and yet when all is said
It was the dream itself enchanted me:
Character isolated by a deed
To engross the present and dominate memory.

1. Pronounced "Usheen," Oisin was a hero in Irish mythology, a warrior poet, and the subject of Yeats's early epic poem, *The Wanderings of Oisin*.
2. Maud Gonne, who starred not in Yeats play *The Countess Cathleen*, but in his 1902 play *Cathleen ni Houlihan*. She hated the British and was, indeed, a fanatical and active opponent of their rule in Ireland.
3. A hero in Irish mythology, and a recurring character in several of Yeats's plays and poems.

Players and painted stage took all my love,
And not those things that they were emblems of.

III

Those masterful images because complete
Grew in pure mind, but out of what began?
A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street,
Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can,
Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut
Who keeps the till. Now that my ladder's gone,
I must lie down where all the ladders start
In the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart.

— (1938 – 1939)

107.

Study Questions and Activities

Study Questions and Activities

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

1. How would you describe the tone, the voice, and the mood of this poem? Is it melancholy, enthusiastic, or some point between? How does Yeats achieve this tone? How does it complement his theme?
2. What is alliteration (cf. Glossary)? Find an example in “Lake Isle” and comment on its effect.
3. Determine the poem’s rhythm (cf. Glossary) and rhyme scheme (cf. Glossary) and assess their effect on theme.

No Second Troy

1. How do you interpret the last line of this poem?
2. Why is this poem almost, but not quite, a Shakespearean sonnet (cf. Glossary)?
3. What does this poem reveal about Yeats’s attitude to Maud, who was married to another man, when Yeats wrote this poem? Does he love her still? Dislike her? Resent her?

Easter, 1916

1. The rhythm of this poem is unusual, basically uneven iambic trimetre (cf. Glossary). Why do you think Yeats used this rhythm for this poem?
2. Explain the meaning of the poem’s famous refrain, “A terrible beauty is born.” Reveal in your answer the type of figurative language exemplified in the phrase “a terrible beauty.”
3. “Easter, 1916” presupposes a considerable knowledge of historical and biographical context. Does the need for this knowledge add to or take away from the poem’s intensity?

The Wild Swans at Coole

1. What do the wild swans at Coole symbolize? How does the symbolism inform the theme of the

poem?

2. Find two examples of half rhyme (cf. Glossary) in the poem and comment on the effect of the half rhyme on the tone and theme of the poem.
3. Compare and contrast this poem with “The Lake Isle of Innisfree.”

The Second Coming

1. The form of the poem is blank verse (cf. Glossary). Why do you think Yeats chose this form for this poem? Consider, especially, its effect on the tone (cf. Glossary) of the poem.
2. Compare and contrast the theme of this poem with the theme of T.S. Eliot’s “The Wasteland.” Do Yeats and Eliot share similar views on the condition of modern society?
3. How does Yeats’s vision of the Second Coming differ from the vision that Christians believe? How do you account for the difference?

A Prayer for My Daughter

1. What are the character traits and the outlook on life Yeats hopes his daughter will possess? How does Yeats’s relationship with Maud Gonne influence his hopes?
2. Why is there a “great gloom” in Yeats’s mind, as he writes this poem?
3. “A Prayer for My Daughter” is a regular verse poem, mainly iambic pentameter, with an aabbcddc rhyme scheme. Note that in lines 6 and 7 of each stanza (after the first) Yeats switches to iambic tetrameter. What effect does this switch have on theme of the poem?

Leda and the Swan

1. What are three features of the form and structure of “Leda and the Swan” that identify it as a sonnet (cf. Glossary)?
2. What, in the Christian faith, is the Annunciation, and how and why does Yeats connect the Annunciation to the events he describes in this poem?
3. Express in your own words the meaning of the question with which the sonnet concludes.

Sailing to Byzantium

1. Note the rhyme scheme (cf. Glossary) of this poem. It is regular, but Yeats makes extensive use of half rhyme (cf. Glossary). What is the effect of this use of half rhyme?
2. Review Yeats’s biography and determine why he expresses disappointment in his native Ireland at the beginning of this poem.
3. The desire to transcend death is a common poetic theme. How does Yeats render this theme in “Sailing to Byzantium”? How does he hope to transcend death?

Among School Children

1. In “Among School Children,” Yeats seeks common ground among apparently disparate, things, people, and ideas: nuns, mothers, and philosophers; Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras; leaf, blossom, and bole; music, dancer, and dance. How does this search for a unity of purpose influence the theme of the poem?
2. An understanding of this poem presupposes so much reader prior knowledge of the poet’s life and of philosophy and mythology. What are the benefits and the drawbacks this presupposition?
3. The verse form of the poem is Ottava rima (cf. Glossary). Why might Yeats have chosen this form for this poem?

Byzantium

1. Is “Byzantium” a regular verse or a free verse poem (cf. Glossary)? Explain your answer.
2. What is it that Yeats, now reincarnated as a golden bird, witnesses from his perch on the golden bough of the Emperor’s palace? What are his mood and emotions as he witnesses the transformation?
3. The desire that Yeats expresses in “Sailing to Byzantium” and its fulfillment in “Byzantium” has been described by some as visionary and by others as eccentric. How would you describe the goal, expressed in these poems, Yeats wants to achieve? Explain your answer.

Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop

1. What is satire (cf. Glossary)? In what sense is “Crazy Jane” a satiric poem?
2. The poem is framed as a debate between Jane and a bishop. What argument does Jane advance to win the debate? Do you support hers or the bishop’s argument?
3. The poem is a first-person narrative, written in modified ballad stanzas (cf. Glossary). Why might Yeats have chosen this form for this poem?

The Circus Animal’s Desertion

1. What fear does Yeats express in this poem? How will he overcome this fear?
2. How might readers know, without referring to Yeats’s biography, that this is one of his last poems?
3. Explain the famous metaphor with which this poem concludes.

Writing Assignments

1. How does Yeats’s unrequited love for Maud Gonne influence his poetry?

2. How does Irish nationalism and the struggle for Irish independence influence Yeats's work?
3. How does Yeats's life-long quest for spiritual enlightenment influence his work?
4. Yeats is, among his other various identities as a poet, a satirist. Discuss Yeats's use of satire in his poetry and his goals as a satirist.

XIV

A.E. Housman (1859–1936)

108.

Biography

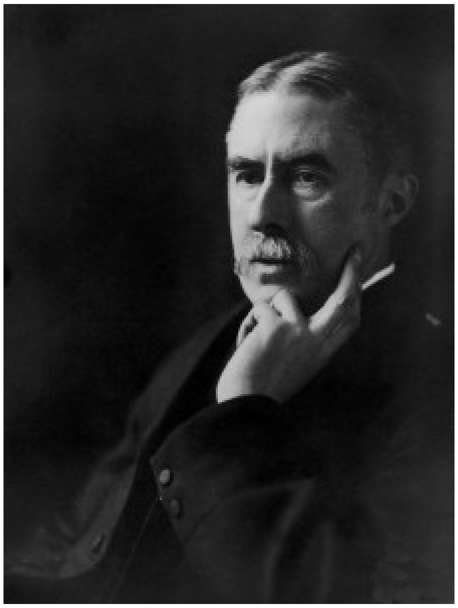


Figure 1: Alfred Edward Housman

Alfred Edward Housman was born in 1859 at Fockbury, Worcestershire, near the Shropshire border in England. He was a brilliant student of classics at Oxford, but after falling in love with a heterosexual fellow student named Moses Jackson, his unrequited passion may have played a part in his failing the final examinations in 1881. According to Housman's biographer, Jackson's rejection condemned Housman to "a lifetime of unfulfilled loneliness" [Norman Page, "Housman, Alfred Edward (1859–1936)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online ed., Jan. 2011. http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/view/article/34013, accessed 22 May 2014]

Because I liked you better
Than suits a man to say,
It irked you and I promised
To throw the thought away. [*More Poems* XXXI]

After Jackson's marriage in 1888, they rarely met again, and never after Jackson retired to British Columbia, Canada, in 1911 to establish a dairy farm in Aldergrove, near Vancouver, where he died of cancer in January 1923.

Having failed his final exams, Housman spent the next 11 years as a civil servant in the Patent Office. Nevertheless, he eventually established a reputation as a great classical scholar and went on to publish acclaimed editions of Latin authors such as Ovid, Juvenal, Manilius and Lucan. He published only two slim volumes of poetry during his lifetime, *A Shropshire Lad* (originally titled *Poems by Terence Hearsay)* in 1896 and *Last Poems* in 1922. Another slim volume, *More Poems*, was published posthumously by his brother and literary executor Laurence Housman, in 1936, while in *A.E.H.*, a

memoir published in 1937, his brother included several "Additional Poems." Housman's poetry, like much of Hardy's poetry, is pervaded by a deep pessimism, unrelieved by religious consolation. Housman strove to emphasize emotion, not intellect, in his verse, and several composers were inspired to give them musical settings.

Media Attributions

109.

Loveliest of Trees

A.E. Housman

From *A Shropshire Lad*

II

Loveliest of Trees

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.
    Now, of my threescore years and ten[1],
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.
    And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.
    —1896

1. Psalm 90:10 "The days of our years are threescore and ten...." A score is 20, so threescore and ten is 70 years.

110.

Farewell to Barn and Stack and Tree

A.E. Housman

VIII

Farewell to Barn and Stack and Tree

"Farewell to barn and stack[1] and tree,
Farewell to Severn[2] shore.
Terence, look your last at me,
For I come home no more.
"The sun burns on the half-mown hill,
By now the blood is dried;
And Maurice amongst the hay lies still
And my knife is in his side.
"My mother thinks us long away;
'Tis time the field were mown.
She had two sons at rising day,
To-night she'll be alone.
"And here's a bloody hand to shake,
And oh, man, here's good-bye;
We'll sweat no more on scythe and rake,
My bloody hands and I.
"I wish you strength to bring you pride,
And a love to keep you clean,
And I wish you luck, come Lammastide[3],
At racing on the green.
"Long for me the rick[4] will wait,
And long will wait the fold,
And long will stand the empty plate,
And dinner will be cold."
— 1896

1. A conical pile as of hay, left standing in the field for storage.
2. Largest river in the U.K., rising in mid-Wales. The English towns of Shrewsbury, Worcester, and Gloucester are situated on its banks.
3. August 1 wheat harvest festival, from Anglo-Saxon, *hlaf-mas* (loaf mass).
4. A stack of hay in the open air.

111.

To an Athlete Dying Young

A.E. Housman

XIX

To an Athlete Dying Young

The time you won your town the race
We chaired[1] you through the market-place;
Man and boy stood cheering by,
And home we brought you shoulder-high.
  To-day, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsman of a stiller town.
  Smart lad, to slip betimes[2] away
From fields where glory does not stay,
And early though the laurel[3] grows
It withers quicker than the rose.
  Eyes the shady night has shut
Cannot see the record cut[4],
And silence sounds no worse than cheers
After earth has stopped the ears:
  Now you will not swell the rout
Of lads that wore their honours out,
Runners whom renown outran
And the name died before the man.
  So set, before the echoes fade,
The fleet foot on the sill of shade,
And hold to the low lintel up
The still-defended challenge-cup.
  And round that early-laurelled head
Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,

1. To place in a chair or on a seat and carry aloft in triumph, as a favourite, a successful competitor.
2. Early.
3. Foliage used by the ancient Greeks to crown victors at the Pythian games, hence to crown with laurel, to honour.
4. Broken.

And find unwithered on its curls
The garland briefer than a girl's.
—1896

112.

Is My Team Ploughing?

A.E. Housman

XXVII

Is My Team Ploughing?

"Is my team ploughing,
That I was used to drive
And hear the harness jingle
When I was man alive?"
Ay, the horses trample,
The harness jingles now;
No change though you lie under
The land you used to plough.
"Is football playing
Along the river shore,
With lads to chase the leather,
Now I stand up no more?"
Ay, the ball is flying,
The lads play heart and soul;
The goal stands up, the keeper
Stands up to keep the goal.
"Is my girl happy,
That I thought hard to leave,
And has she tired of weeping
As she lies down at eve?"
Ay, she lies down lightly,
She lies not down to weep,
Your girl is well contented.
Be still, my lad, and sleep.
"Is my friend hearty,
Now I am thin and pine,
And has he found to sleep in
A better bed than mine?"
Yes, lad, I lie easy,
I lie as lads would choose;

I cheer a dead man's sweetheart,
Never ask me whose.
— 1896

113.

[Additional Poems]

A.E. Housman

XVIII

[*Additional Poems*]

Oh who is that young sinner with the handcuffs on his wrists?
And what has he been after that they groan and shake their fists?
And wherefore is he wearing such a conscience-stricken air?
Oh they're taking him to prison for the colour of his hair.
  'Tis a shame to human nature, such a head of hair as his;
In the good old time 'twas hanging for the colour that it is;
Though hanging isn't bad enough and flaying would be fair
For the nameless and abominable colour of his hair.
  Oh a deal of pains he's taken and a pretty price he's paid
To hide his poll or dye it of a mentionable shade;
But they've pulled the beggar's hat off for the world to see and stare,
And they're haling him to justice for the colour of his hair.
  Now 'tis oakum[1] for his fingers and the treadmill for his feet
And the quarry-gang on Portland in the cold and in the heat,
And between his spells of labour in the time he has to spare
He can curse the God that made him for the colour of his hair.
  — 1937

1. "Prisoners sentenced to hard labour had to shred jute, a coarse fiber mixed with tar to make oakum, used for caulking wooden ships. The task bloodied their fingers" [S.Barnet, *Literature for Composition*, 8th ed., 1325].

114.

[More Poems]

A.E. Housman

XXXI

[*More Poems*]

Because I like you[1] better
Than suits a man to say,
It irked you and I promised
I'd throw the thought away.
To put the world between us
We parted stiff and dry:
"Farewell," said you, "forget me."
"Fare well, I will," said I.
If e'er, where clover whitens
The dead man's knoll, you pass,
And no tall flower to meet you
Starts in the trefoiled grass,
Halt by the headstone shading
The heart you have not stirred,
And say the lad that loved you
Was one that kept his word.
— 1936

1. The "you" was Moses Jackson, who died in 1923 in Vancouver, Canada.

115.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

Loveliest of Trees

1. How old is the speaker in the poem?
2. What is the setting of the poem (i.e., time and place)?
3. What is the speaker's purpose in the poem?
4. What is the significance of the word "Eastertide"?
5. What kind of cycle is suggested by the second stanza, and how is this connected to Eastertide and nature?
6. What is the theme of the poem?

Farewell to Barn and Stack and Tree

1. What is the dramatic situation of the poem (i.e., who is talking to whom, where, when)?
2. Who is Terence?

To an Athlete Dying Young

1. What is the "stiller town" (line 5)?
2. Why does the speaker call the athlete "smart"?
3. Clarify the meaning of "low lintel" (line 23).
4. Is this a *carpe diem* poem?
5. In a brief essay, compare and contrast this poem with John Updike's "Ex-Basketball Player."
6. What is the predominant metre in the poem?
7. Give examples of alliteration, consonance, and assonance.
8. Give examples of end-stopped and run-on lines.

Is My Team Ploughing?

1. According to Thomas Hardy's widow, this was Hardy's favourite Housman poem. Compare it with Hardy's "Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave?"
2. Of the three kinds of irony — verbal, situational, and dramatic — which type do you find in this poem? Discuss.
3. View Ian Bostridge's rendition of Ralph Vaughan Williams's "Is My Team Ploughing." How does the singer emphasize the colloquy between the living and the dead? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDvP0Lnh1-Q

   An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?p=56

   QR Code Ian Bostridge – "Is My Team Ploughing."

4. Dr. Joseph Mersand, in his edition of *A Shropshire Lad*, points out that Vaughan Williams cut stanzas 3 and 4, which prompted Housman's angry observation, "How would he like me to cut two bars of his music?" (*A Shropshire Lad*, p. 82). Which version, Housman's original or that of Vaughan Williams, do you prefer?

[Additional Poems]

1. What is the tone of stanza 1? of stanza 2?
2. In the first line, Housman originally wrote "fellow" but revised it with "sinner." Why do you suppose he made the change?
3. This poem was written in August 1895, "shortly after Oscar Wilde, the most popular British playwright of the period, was convicted of sodomy and given the maximum prison sentence. Although the poem does not mention homosexuality, Wilde's conviction unquestionably inspired it" (*Literature for Composition*, p. 1,323). In view of this information, what do you take to be the theme of this poem?

Essay Topics

1. Choose one or two poems from *A Shropshire Lad* such as “(I) 1887”, “(III) The Recruit” “(IV) Reveille,” and “(XXXV) On the Idle Hill of Summer,” and discuss how Housman’s attitude to war may have changed by the time of *Last Poems*, many of which were written during and after World War I. See, for example, “Oh, stay at home, my lad.”
2. Read XXXI (“On Wenlock Edge”) http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/A_Shropshire_Lad/XXXI from *A Shropshire Lad*, and then read “Wenlock Edge” by Alice Munro. Write a short essay on Munro’s use of the poem and what it contributes to the story.
3. Research the relationship between Housman and Moses Jackson. Write a brief essay discussing the influence of Jackson on Housman. Pay particular attention to Poem XXXI in *More Poems*. You will want to log on to the following link, which describes unpublished correspondence between the two. Auction catalogue. Web. 22 May 2014.
4. Incidentally, Moses Jackson’s son Hector, born 1892 in Karachi, then part of British India, was a decorated war hero who, after surviving combat at Vimy Ridge and Passchendaele, returned to Vancouver in the summer of 1919, enrolling at the University of British Columbia. On January 18, 1920, he was hit by a taxi on Cambie Bridge, Vancouver, and died of his injuries a week later. [See the online review of *A Fine View of the Show* by Andrew Jackson, Hector Jackson’s nephew. Hector was one of Moses Jackson’s sons.]
5. Download the version of *A Shropshire Lad* available at ebooks Adelaide. Download the excellent small pamphlet by Peter Cash from the English Association on *A Shropshire Lad*: Cash, Peter. *A Shropshire Lad*. English Association: Leicester. 2011. Web. 23 May 2014. In the first paragraph of the booklet, Cash makes the statement that Terence Hearsay is the speaker of all 63 poems in the volume. Do a word search in your ibook *A Shropshire Lad*, using the word “Terence.” You will soon find many references to Terence. What evidence do you find to refute or at least qualify Cash’s statement? Pay particular attention to poem VIII, “Farewell to Barn and Stack and Tree.”

Resources

A Shropshire Lad available at ebooks Adelaide:

Cash, Peter. *A Shropshire Lad*. English Association: Leicester. 2011. Web. 23 May 2014. <http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/english-association/publications/bookmarks/longer-poems-bookmarks/LP5.pdf>

XV

Hector Hugh Munro (Saki) (1870–1916)

116.

Biography



Figure 1: Hector Hugh Munro

Hector Hugh Munro ("Saki") was born in Burma in 1870. His father was an inspector-general in the Burma police, and when Hector was only two, his mother died following complications from a miscarriage. After their mother's death, he and his two older siblings were raised in Devon by two strict and puritanical maiden aunts. In 1893, when he was in his early twenties, Munro joined the Colonial Burmese Military Police—just as the young Eric Blair (George Orwell) was to do years later. Malaria caused his return to England a year later, where he soon became a successful journalist and, by 1909, a popular writer of fiction. Many of his stories satirize Edwardian attitudes to the class structure – the nobility, the new rich, and the working classes. His pen name "Saki" is probably an allusion to the cup-bearer in the Edward Fitzgerald translation of the *Rubáiyat of Omar Khayyám*, a very popular poem at the time.

His biographer describes his method: "Characters are defined with a bizarre name and a deft phrase or two, the wit depends on perfect wording and unexpected turns, and the action is often some kind of practical joke, aimed at deflating pretension or exposing cowardice….His epigrammatic style and witty, amoral young men such as Clovis Sangrail derive from Oscar Wilde, his fantastical humour owes much to Lewis Carroll, and some of his grimmer stories, like his politics, put him close to Kipling" [Dominic Hibberd, "Munro, Hector Hugh [Saki] (1870–1916)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,* Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/view/article/35149, accessed 18 May 2014].

Even though at the beginning of World War I, he was 44 and officially too old to serve as a soldier, Munro enlisted in the 22nd Battalion, Royal Fusiliers. He refused a commission but was soon promoted to Lance Sergeant. On November 16, 1916, while serving in France, he was killed by a German sniper's bullet. Allegedly, his last words were, "Put that damned cigarette out!"

Munro, Ethel. "A Biography of H.H. Munro." n.d. Web. 21 May 2014. http://www.unz.org/Pub/MunroHH-1929v08-00003?View=PDFPages

Media Attributions

117.

The Open Window

Hector Hugh Munro (Saki)

"My aunt will be down presently, Mr. Nuttel," said a very self-possessed young lady of fifteen; "in the meantime you must try and put up with me."

Framton Nuttel endeavoured to say the correct something which should duly flatter the niece of the moment without unduly discounting the aunt that was to come. Privately he doubted more than ever whether these formal visits on a succession of total strangers would do much towards helping the nerve cure which he was supposed to be undergoing.

"I know how it will be," his sister had said when he was preparing to migrate to this rural retreat; "you will bury yourself down there and not speak to a living soul, and your nerves will be worse than ever from moping. I shall just give you letters of introduction to all the people I know there. Some of them, as far as I can remember, were quite nice."

Framton wondered whether Mrs. Sappleton, the lady to whom he was presenting one of the letters of introduction, came into the nice division.

"Do you know many of the people round here?" asked the niece, when she judged that they had had sufficient silent communion.

"Hardly a soul," said Framton. "My sister was staying here, at the rectory, you know, some four years ago, and she gave me letters of introduction to some of the people here."

He made the last statement in a tone of distinct regret.

"Then you know practically nothing about my aunt?" pursued the self-possessed young lady.

"Only her name and address," admitted the caller. He was wondering whether Mrs. Sappleton was in the married or widowed state. An undefinable something about the room seemed to suggest masculine habitation.

"Her great tragedy happened just three years ago," said the child; "that would be since your sister's time."

"Her tragedy?" asked Framton; somehow in this restful country spot tragedies seemed out of place.

"You may wonder why we keep that window wide open on an October afternoon," said the niece, indicating a large French window that opened on to a lawn.

"It is quite warm for the time of the year," said Framton; "but has that window got anything to do with the tragedy?"

"Out through that window, three years ago to a day, her husband and her two young brothers went off for their day's shooting. They never came back. In crossing the moor to their favourite snipe-shooting ground they were all three engulfed in a treacherous piece of bog. It had been that dreadful wet summer, you know, and places that were safe in other years gave way suddenly without warning. Their bodies were never recovered. That was the dreadful part of it." Here the child's voice lost its self-possessed note and became falteringly human. "Poor aunt always thinks that they will come back some day, they and the little brown spaniel that was lost with them, and walk in at that window just as they used to do. That is why the window is kept open every evening till it is quite dusk. Poor dear aunt, she has often told me how they went out, her husband with his white waterproof coat over his arm, and Ronnie, her youngest

brother, singing 'Bertie, why do you bound?'[1] as he always did to tease her, because she said it got on her nerves. Do you know, sometimes on still, quiet evenings like this, I almost get a creepy feeling that they will all walk in through that window —"

She broke off with a little shudder. It was a relief to Framton when the aunt bustled into the room with a whirl of apologies for being late in making her appearance.

"I hope Vera has been amusing you?" she said.

"She has been very interesting," said Framton.

"I hope you don't mind the open window," said Mrs. Sappleton briskly; "my husband and brothers will be home directly from shooting, and they always come in this way. They've been out for snipe in the marshes today, so they'll make a fine mess over my poor carpets. So like you men-folk, isn't it?"

She rattled on cheerfully about the shooting and the scarcity of birds, and the prospects for duck in the winter. To Framton it was all purely horrible. He made a desperate but only partially successful effort to turn the talk on to a less ghastly topic; he was conscious that his hostess was giving him only a fragment of her attention, and her eyes were constantly straying past him to the open window and the lawn beyond. It was certainly an unfortunate coincidence that he should have paid his visit on this tragic anniversary.

"The doctors agree in ordering me complete rest, an absence of mental excitement, and avoidance of anything in the nature of violent physical exercise," announced Framton, who laboured under the tolerably widespread delusion that total strangers and chance acquaintances are hungry for the least detail of one's ailments and infirmities, their cause and cure. "On the matter of diet they are not so much in agreement," he continued.

"No?" said Mrs. Sappleton, in a voice which only replaced a yawn at the last moment. Then she suddenly brightened into alert attention — but not to what Framton was saying.

"Here they are at last!" she cried. "Just in time for tea, and don't they look as if they were muddy up to the eyes!"

Framton shivered slightly and turned towards the niece with a look intended to convey sympathetic comprehension. The child was staring out through the open window with dazed horror in her eyes. In a chill shock of nameless fear Framton swung round in his seat and looked in the same direction.

In the deepening twilight three figures were walking across the lawn towards the window; they all carried guns under their arms, and one of them was additionally burdened with a white coat hung over his shoulders. A tired brown spaniel kept close at their heels. Noiselessly they neared the house, and then a hoarse young voice chanted out of the dusk: "I said, Bertie, why do you bound?"

Framton grabbed wildly at his stick and hat; the hall-door, the gravel-drive, and the front gate were dimly-noted stages in his headlong retreat. A cyclist coming along the road had to run into the hedge to avoid an imminent collision.

"Here we are, my dear," said the bearer of the white mackintosh, coming in through the window; "fairly muddy, but most of it's dry. Who was that who bolted out as we came up?"

"A most extraordinary man, a Mr. Nuttel," said Mrs. Sappleton; "could only talk about his illnesses, and dashed off without a word of good-bye or apology when you arrived. One would think he had seen a ghost."

"I expect it was the spaniel," said the niece calmly; "he told me he had a horror of dogs. He was once hunted into a cemetery somewhere on the banks of the Ganges by a pack of pariah dogs, and had to spend the night in a newly dug grave with the creatures snarling and grinning and foaming just above him. Enough to make anyone lose their nerve."

Romance at short notice was her specialty.

1. A lyric from the song "Bertie the Bounder" in the popular Edwardian musical comedy *Our Miss Gibbs* (1909). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OmB6J9eGThM

118.

The Schartz-Metterklume Method

Hector Hugh Munro (Saki)

Lady Carlotta stepped out on to the platform of the small wayside station and took a turn or two up and down its uninteresting length, to kill time till the train should be pleased to proceed on its way. Then, in the roadway beyond, she saw a horse struggling with a more than ample load, and a carter of the sort that seems to bear a sullen hatred against the animal that helps him to earn a living. Lady Carlotta promptly betook her to the roadway, and put rather a different complexion on the struggle. Certain of her acquaintances were wont to give her plentiful admonition as to the undesirability of interfering on behalf of a distressed animal, such interference being "none of her business." Only once had she put the doctrine of non-interference into practice, when one of its most eloquent exponents had been besieged for nearly three hours in a small and extremely uncomfortable may-tree by an angry boar-pig, while Lady Carlotta, on the other side of the fence, had proceeded with the water-colour sketch she was engaged on, and refused to interfere between the boar and his prisoner. It is to be feared that she lost the friendship of the ultimately rescued lady. On this occasion she merely lost the train, which gave way to the first sign of impatience it had shown throughout the journey, and steamed off without her. She bore the desertion with philosophical indifference; her friends and relations were thoroughly well used to the fact of her luggage arriving without her. She wired a vague non-committal message to her destination to say that she was coming on "by another train." Before she had time to think what her next move might be she was confronted by an imposingly attired lady, who seemed to be taking a prolonged mental inventory of her clothes and looks.

"You must be Miss Hope, the governess I've come to meet," said the apparition, in a tone that admitted of very little argument.

"Very well, if I must I must," said Lady Carlotta to herself with dangerous meekness.

"I am Mrs. Quabarl," continued the lady; "and where, pray, is your luggage?"

"It's gone astray," said the alleged governess, falling in with the excellent rule of life that the absent are always to blame; the luggage had, in point of fact, behaved with perfect correctitude. "I've just telegraphed about it," she added, with a nearer approach to truth.

"How provoking," said Mrs. Quabarl; "these railway companies are so careless. However, my maid can lend you things for the night," and she led the way to her car.

During the drive to the Quabarl mansion Lady Carlotta was impressively introduced to the nature of the charge that had been thrust upon her; she learned that Claude and Wilfrid were delicate, sensitive young people, that Irene had the artistic temperament highly developed, and that Viola was something or other else of a mould equally commonplace among children of that class and type in the twentieth century.

"I wish them not only to be *taught*," said Mrs. Quabarl, "but *interested* in what they learn. In their history lessons, for instance, you must try to make them feel that they are being introduced to the life-stories of men and women who really lived, not merely committing a mass of names and dates to memory. French, of course, I shall expect you to talk at meal-times several days in the week."

"I shall talk French four days of the week and Russian in the remaining three."

"Russian? My dear Miss Hope, no one in the house speaks or understands Russian."

"That will not embarrass me in the least," said Lady Carlotta coldly.

Mrs. Quabarl, to use a colloquial expression, was knocked off her perch. She was one of those imperfectly self-assured individuals who are magnificent and autocratic as long as they are not seriously opposed. The least show of unexpected resistance goes a long way towards rendering them cowed and apologetic. When the new governess failed to express wondering admiration of the large newly-purchased and expensive car, and lightly alluded to the superior advantages of one or two makes which had just been put on the market, the discomfiture of her patroness became almost abject. Her feelings were those which might have animated a general of ancient warfaring days, on beholding his heaviest battle-elephant ignominiously driven off the field by slingers and javelin throwers.

At dinner that evening, although reinforced by her husband, who usually duplicated her opinions and lent her moral support generally, Mrs. Quabarl regained none of her lost ground. The governess not only helped herself well and truly to wine, but held forth with considerable show of critical knowledge on various vintage matters, concerning which the Quabarls were in no wise able to pose as authorities. Previous governesses had limited their conversation on the wine topic to a respectful and doubtless sincere expression of a preference for water. When this one went as far as to recommend a wine firm in whose hands you could not go very far wrong Mrs. Quabarl thought it time to turn the conversation into more usual channels.

"We got very satisfactory references about you from Canon[1] Teep," she observed; "a very estimable man, I should think."

"Drinks like a fish and beats his wife, otherwise a very lovable character," said the governess imperturbably.

"*My dear* Miss Hope! I trust you are exaggerating," exclaimed the Quabarls in unison.

"One must in justice admit that there is some provocation," continued the romancer. "Mrs. Teep is quite the most irritating bridge-player that I have ever sat down with; her leads and declarations would condone a certain amount of brutality in her partner, but to souse her with the contents of the only soda-water syphon in the house on a Sunday afternoon, when one couldn't get another, argues an indifference to the comfort of others which I cannot altogether overlook. You may think me hasty in my judgments, but it was practically on account of the syphon incident that I left."

"We will talk of this some other time," said Mrs. Quabarl hastily.

"I shall never allude to it again," said the governess with decision.

Mr. Quabarl made a welcome diversion by asking what studies the new instructress proposed to inaugurate on the morrow.

"History to begin with," she informed him.

"Ah, history," he observed sagely; "now in teaching them history you must take care to interest them in what they learn. You must make them feel that they are being introduced to the life-stories of men and women who really lived —"

"I've told her all that," interposed Mrs. Quabarl.

"I teach history on the Schartz-Metterklume method," said the governess loftily.

"Ah, yes," said her listeners, thinking it expedient to assume an acquaintance at least with the name.

* * * *

"What are you children doing out here?" demanded Mrs. Quabarl the next morning, on finding Irene sitting rather glumly at the head of the stairs, while her sister was perched in an attitude of depressed discomfort on the window-seat behind her, with a wolf-skin rug almost covering her.

"We are having a history lesson," came the unexpected reply. "I am supposed to be Rome, and Viola

1. A high-ranking cleric in the Church of England.

up there is the she-wolf; not a real wolf, but the figure of one that the Romans used to set store by — I forget why. Claude and Wilfrid have gone to fetch the shabby women."

"The shabby women?"

"Yes, they've got to carry them off. They didn't want to, but Miss Hope got one of father's fives-bats[2] and said she'd give them a number nine spanking if they didn't, so they've gone to do it."

A loud, angry screaming from the direction of the lawn drew Mrs. Quabarl thither in hot haste, fearful lest the threatened castigation might even now be in process of infliction. The outcry, however, came principally from the two small daughters of the lodge-keeper, who were being hauled and pushed towards the house by the panting and dishevelled Claude and Wilfrid, whose task was rendered even more arduous by the incessant, if not very effectual, attacks of the captured maidens' small brother. The governess, fives-bat in hand, sat negligently on the stone balustrade, presiding over the scene with the cold impartiality of a Goddess of Battles. A furious and repeated chorus of "I'll tell muvver" rose from the lodge-children, but the lodge-mother, who was hard of hearing, was for the moment immersed in the preoccupation of her washtub.

After an apprehensive glance in the direction of the lodge (the good woman was gifted with the highly militant temper which is sometimes the privilege of deafness) Mrs. Quabarl flew indignantly to the rescue of the struggling captives.

"Wilfrid! Claude! Let those children go at once. Miss Hope, what on earth is the meaning of this scene?"

"Early Roman history; the Sabine Women[3], don't you know? It's the Schartz–Metterklume method to make children understand history by acting it themselves; fixes it in their memory, you know. Of course, if, thanks to your interference, your boys go through life thinking that the Sabine women ultimately escaped, I really cannot be held responsible."

"You may be very clever and modern, Miss Hope," said Mrs. Quabarl firmly, "but I should like you to leave here by the next train. Your luggage will be sent after you as soon as it arrives."

"I'm not certain exactly where I shall be for the next few days," said the dismissed instructress of youth; "you might keep my luggage till I wire my address. There are only a couple of trunks and some golf-clubs and a leopard cub."

"A leopard cub!" gasped Mrs. Quabarl. Even in her departure this extraordinary person seemed destined to leave a trail of embarrassment behind her.

"Well, it's rather left off being a cub; it's more than half-grown, you know. A fowl every day and a rabbit on Sundays is what it usually gets. Raw beef makes it too excitable. Don't trouble about getting the car for me, I'm rather inclined for a walk."

And Lady Carlotta strode out of the Quabarl horizon.

The advent of the genuine Miss Hope, who had made a mistake as to the day on which she was due to arrive, caused a turmoil which that good lady was quite unused to inspiring. Obviously the Quabarl family had been woefully befooled, but a certain amount of relief came with the knowledge.

"How tiresome for you, dear Carlotta," said her hostess, when the overdue guest ultimately arrived; "how very tiresome losing your train and having to stop overnight in a strange place."

"Oh dear, no," said Lady Carlotta; "not at all tiresome — for me."

2. Bat Fives was an earlier form of "Fives," an English court game similar to handball and played with a gloved or bare fist. In Bat Fives, wooden bats with leather handles were used.
3. The Sabines were legendary (750 BC) enemies of the early Romans. The Sabines fought the Romans in order to avenge the Romans' rape or abduction of the Sabine women.

119.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

The Open Window

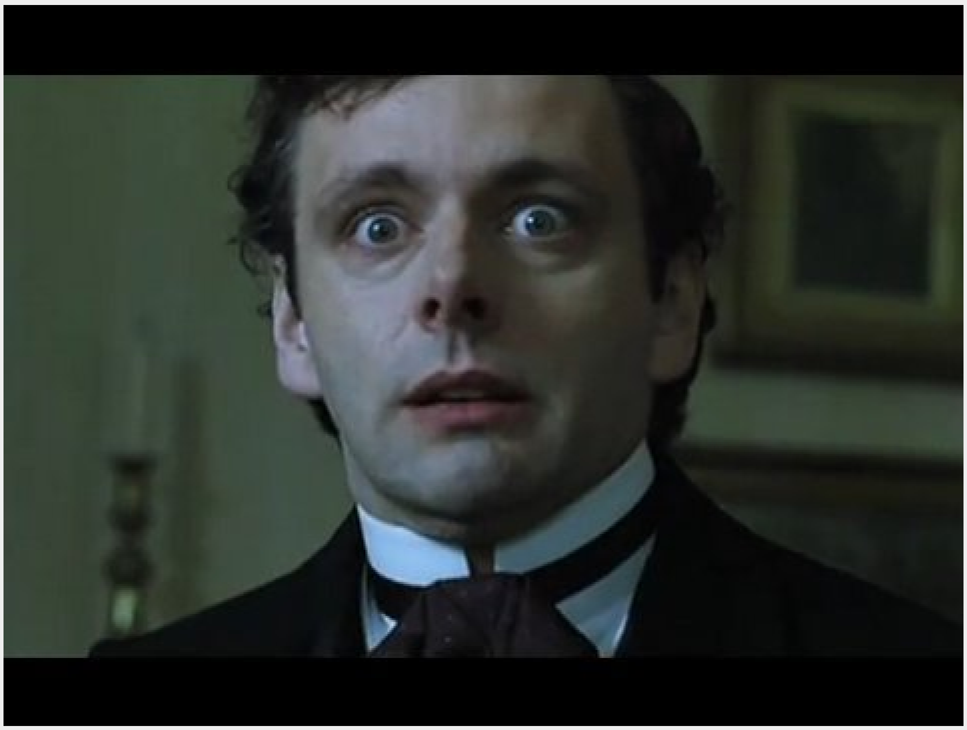
1. Consult a good dictionary and then clarify the meaning of the word "romance" in the last sentence.
2. In what way are the names of the three main characters well chosen?
3. Give an example of each of the three types of irony in the story: verbal, dramatic, and situational irony.

The Schartz-Metterlume Method

1. Discuss the nature of the satire against the *nouveau riche* class in the story.
2. Does Lady Carlotta ever actually tell a lie in the story?
3. What is the significance of Carlotta's title and rank?
4. Give some examples of how Saki's style contributes to the humour.
5. To paraphrase Henri Bergson, "Comedy is the triumph of the vital [energetic, life-supporting, unpredictable, imaginative] over the mechanical [predictable, rigid]." (A good example of the triumph of the vital character over the mechanical one would be that of the Roadrunner over Wile E. Coyote in any of the Roadrunner cartoons.) Discuss the triumph of either Vera over Frampton in "The Open Window" or the triumph of Lady Carlotta over Mrs. Quabaral in "The Schartz-Metterklume Method."
6. Compare the adaptation of "The Schartz- Metterklume Method," also on YouTube, with the professionally produced "The Open Doors" mentioned in the Resources.

Resources

A short film adaptation of "The Open Window" called "The Open Doors"



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?p=379

The Open Doors by FutureShorts

QR Code The Open Doors

The Schartz- Metterklume Method



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?p=379

QR Code The Schartz- Metterklume Method

The Schartz- Metterklume Method by Matt Grover.

XVI

World War I Poetry

120.

Introduction

The "war to end wars," as H.G. Wells described it in a series of newspaper articles,[1] began in 1914. The main belligerents were the allied forces of France, Britain, and the dominions, including Canada, Australia, and New Zealand; Russia (until 1917) and, after April 1917, the United States—versus the central powers: Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey. Few believed that the war would last very long, but gradually both sides became mired in a stalemate, and it dragged on until November 1918, with unparalleled loss of life—nearly nine million combatants and millions of civilians died as a result of the war.

One striking difference between the war poetry of the Victorian Age as seen in Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade" and the poetry of World War I is the shift from a more or less unquestioning acceptance of war to a growing disillusionment. Although Tennyson makes clear that the military command had blundered in this instance, he refuses to dwell on the incompetence of the generals and instead emphasizes the bravery of the British soldier. Similarly, Rupert Brooke, perhaps the public face of the British war effort before his death prior to seeing action, carries forward a romanticized, chivalric view of war, particularly in his poem, "The Soldier," a poem that Dean Inge, one of the most important clergymen in Britain, read as part of his Easter Sunday sermon at St. Paul's Cathedral in 1914, and to which Winston Churchill referred in an obituary published in the *Times* three days after Brooke's death. Even Siegfried Sassoon, the poet who, along with Wilfred Owen, was considered one of the poets most critical of the war, seems to echo Brooke's romanticizing attitude in an early poem, "Absolution":

…War is our scourge; yet war has made us wise,
And, fighting for our freedom, we are free.
Horror of wounds and anger at the foe,
And loss of things desired; all these must pass.
We are the happy legion….

But as the war dragged on, "with more and more poets killed and the survivors increasingly disillusioned…a patriotic poem such as 'The Soldier' became a ridiculous anachronism in the face of the realities of trench warfare, and the even more blatantly patriotic note sounded by…John Freeman's 'Happy is England Now,' which claimed that 'there's not a nobleness of heart, hand, brain/But shines the purer; happiest is England now/In those that fight' seemed obscene" (*Norton Anthology of English Literature, 20th Century and After*, 9th ed., 2017). And unlike Tennyson's uncritical response to the effects of blundering generals, Sassoon implies in a later poem, that the cheery old general, safely distant from the front line, who passes two enlisted men on their way to the front, is perhaps the real enemy: "Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of 'em dead/And we're cursing his Staff for incompetent swine" ("The General"). Interestingly, Sassoon tempered the sting of the final line in the published version. A draft version, reprinted below, reads, "murdered them" rather than "did for them".

In "Glory of Women," Sassoon asserts that women believe that "chivalry redeems" the disgrace of war, but after reading Churchill's florid obituary of Brooke and the majority of pre-1914 war poems written by men, it becomes clear that such an attitude was pervasive before chivalry collided with the

1. The articles were later published in book form as *The War That Will End War.* <https://archive.org/details/warthatwillendwa00welluoft>

ugly reality of trench warfare—and would have been shared by poets and poetry readers of both genders. Indeed, rather than focus on the apparent misogyny of this poem, it should be possible to see that "women" function thematically in this poem as do other generalized, uninitiated non-combatants, such as the clergyman in "They" or the aforementioned General. Indeed, women played an important role in World War I, the world's first *total war*, which involved all sectors of the populace: men and women at home as well as those on the battlefield. England's industry was mobilized in the service of the war; the war was brought home to everyone.

In this unit, you will be encouraged to look closely at the series of Oxford University's online tutorials devoted to some major poets of World War I—especially Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, and Isaac Rosenberg—**The First World War Poetry Digital Archive**. Each tutorial includes a biographical introduction to the poet, a hyperlinked "feature poem," some literary criticism of the featured poem, as well as other texts by the poet.

Before looking closely at the tutorials of the major war poets, please read the **Seminar Introduction, "What is War Poetry?"**

The Seminar Introduction defines war poetry, gives a brief overview of World War I, also known as the Great War, and explains the focus on poets who served on "the Western Front." You might also wish to bookmark the seminar "map," which will make it easier to navigate the tutorials.

A major strength of these tutorials is the opportunity they afford students to browse archival materials, including images of original drafts of many of the poems, as well as giving online access to other key documents such as the poets' correspondence, and to a huge archive of period photographs and other related materials. Students are encouraged to explore, using the search key function. A specific example is to search "Vera Brittain, author of the World War I memoir, *Testament of Youth*, which has been adapted as a television mini-series (1979) and a full-length feature film (2015).

You will find numerous draft and published poems by her, including the holograph (handwritten) version of her poem "Perhaps," which commemorates the death of her soldier-fiancé, Roland Leighton, who was also a poet, as well as her correspondence, war diaries, and photographs. View the trailer for the 2015 film *Testament of Youth* here.

One of the tutorials in the First World War Poetry Digital Archive gives a brief overview of war poems by women, and, like the other tutorials, can be used as a launching pad for future research:

Given that 2014 is the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War, there are numerous detailed websites devoted to the subject. For this unit, students will find the following links particularly useful:

The Twentieth Century: Topics – Representing the Great War
First World War.com – Women and WW1
World_War_I Wikipedia
BBC World War One

XVII

Wilfred Owen (1893–1918)

121.

Biography



Figure 1: Wilfred Owen

Owen was born on March 18, 1893, in Oswestry, Shropshire, England, the son of Tom and Susan Owen. After the death of his grandfather in 1897, the family moved to Birkenhead (Merseyside).

His education began at the Birkenhead Institute and then continued at the Technical School in Shrewsbury when the family was forced to move there in 1906 when his father was appointed assistant superintendent for the western region of the railways. Owen displayed a keen interest in the arts at an early age, and began experimenting in poetry when he was 17. After failing to attain entrance to the University of London, he spent a year as a lay assistant to the Reverend Herbert Wigan at Dunsden before leaving for Bordeaux, France, to teach at the Berlitz School of English.

During the latter part of 1914 and early 1915, Owen became increasingly aware of the magnitude of World War I and he returned to England in September 1915 to enlist in the Artists' Rifles a month later. He received his commission to the Manchester Regiment (5th Battalion) in June 1916 and spent the rest of the year training in England.

In many ways, 1917 proved to be the pivotal year in his life and, as it turned out, the penultimate year of his life. In January, he was posted to France and saw his first action in which he and his men were forced to hold a flooded dugout in no man's land for 50 hours while under heavy bombardment. In March, he was injured with a concussion but returned to the front line in April. In May, he was caught in a shell explosion, and when his battalion was eventually relieved, he was diagnosed as having shell shock (or "neurasthenia"). He was evacuated to England and on June 26 he arrived at Craiglockhart War Hospital near Edinburgh.

Had Owen not arrived at the hospital at that time one wonders what might have happened to his

literary career, for it was there that he met Siegfried Sassoon who was also a patient. Sassoon already had a reputation as a poet, and after an awkward introduction he agreed to look over Owen's poems. As well as encouraging Owen to continue writing, Sassoon introduced him to such literary figures as Robert Graves (a friend of Sassoon's), which, in turn, after Owen's release from hospital, allowed him to mix with luminaries such as Arnold Bennett and H. G. Wells.

The period in Craiglockhart and the early part of 1918 was in many ways his most creative, and he wrote many of the poems during that time for which he is remembered today. In June 1918, he rejoined his regiment at Scarborough and then in August he returned to France. He was awarded the Military Cross for bravery at Amiens, but was killed on November 4 while attempting to lead his men across the Sambre Canal at Ors. The news of his death reached his parents on November 11, 1918, the day of the armistice.

Dr. Stuart Lee

Oxford Tutorials

Click on the Oxford First World War Poetry unit link and work your way through as many of the poems/letters as you wish.

Media Attributions

122.

Disabled

Wilfred Owen

He sat in a wheeled chair, waiting for dark,
And shivered in his ghastly suit of grey,
Legless, sewn short at elbow. Through the park
Voices of boys rang saddening like a hymn,
Voices of play and pleasure after day,
Till gathering sleep had mothered them from him.
About this time Town used to swing so gay
When glow-lamps budded in the light blue trees,
And girls glanced lovelier as the air grew dim,
—In the old times, before he threw away his knees.
Now he will never feel again how slim
Girls' waists are, or how warm their subtle hands.
All of them touch him like some queer disease.
There was an artist silly for his face,
For it was younger than his youth, last year.
Now, he is old; his back will never brace;
He's lost his colour very far from here,
Poured it down shell-holes till the veins ran dry,
And half his lifetime lapsed in the hot race,
And leap of purple spurted from his thigh.
One time he liked a bloodsmear down his leg,
After the matches carried shoulder-high.
It was after football, when he'd drunk a peg,
He thought he'd better join. He wonders why . . .
Someone had said he'd look a god in kilts.
That's why; and maybe, too, to please his Meg,
Aye, that was it, to please the giddy jilts,
He asked to join. He didn't have to beg;
Smiling they wrote his lie; aged nineteen years.
Germans he scarcely thought of; and no fears
Of Fear came yet. He thought of jewelled hilts
For daggers in plaid socks; of smart salutes;
And care of arms; and leave; and pay arrears;
Esprit de corps; and hints for young recruits.
And soon, he was drafted out with drums and cheers.
Some cheered him home, but not as crowds cheer Goal.
Only a solemn man who brought him fruits

Thanked him; and then inquired about his soul.
Now, he will spend a few sick years in Institutes,
And do what things the rules consider wise, (40)
And take whatever pity they may dole.
To-night he noticed how the women's eyes
Passed from him to the strong men that were whole.
How cold and late it is! Why don't they come
And put him into bed? Why don't they come?

123.

Dulce et Decorum Est

Wilfred Owen

[1]

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines[2] that dropped behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime…
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*
Pro patria mori.

1. Owen alludes in the title and in the last two lines to Horace, *Odes* 3.2.13: "It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country."
2. 5.9-caliber shells.

124.

Futility

Wilfred Owen

Move him into the sun—
Gently its touch awoke him once,
At home, whispering of fields unsown.
Always it woke him, even in France,
Until this morning and this snow.
If anything might rouse him now
The kind old sun will know.
   Think how it wakes the seeds—
Woke, once, the clays of a cold star.
Are limbs so dear-achieved, are sides
Full-nerved,—still warm,—too hard to stir?
Was it for this the clay grew tall?
—O what made fatuous sunbeams toil
To break earth's sleep at all?

125.

S.I.W.

Wilfred Owen

I will to the King[1],
And offer him consolation in his trouble,
For that man there has set his teeth to die,
And being one that hates obedience,
Discipline, and orderliness of life,
I cannot mourn him.
– W. B. YEATS

I The Prologue

Patting goodbye, doubtless they told the lad
He’d always show the Hun a brave man’s face;
Father would sooner him dead than in disgrace,—
Was proud to see him going, aye, and glad.
Perhaps his mother whimpered how she’d fret
Until he got a nice safe wound to nurse.
Sisters would wish girls too could shoot, charge, curse…
Brothers—would send his favourite cigarette.
Each week, month after month, they wrote the same,
Thinking him sheltered in some Y. M. Hut,
Because he said so, writing on his butt
Where once an hour a bullet missed its aim.
And misses teased the hunger of his brain.
His eyes grew old with wincing, and his hand
Reckless with ague. Courage leaked, as sand
From the best sandbags after years of rain.
But never leave, wound, fever, trench-foot, shock,
Untrapped the wretch. And death seemed still withheld
For torture of lying machinally shelled,
At the pleasure of this world’s Powers who’d run amok.
He’d seen men shoot their hands, on night patrol.
Their people never knew. Yet they were vile.
‘Death sooner than dishonour, that’s the style!’
So Father said.

II The Action

One dawn, our wire patrol
Carried him. This time, Death had not missed.

1. The Monk’s words in Yeats’s play, *The King’s Threshold*.

We could do nothing but wipe his bleeding cough.
Could it be accident?—Rifles go off…
Not sniped? No. (Later they found the English ball[2].)

III The Poem

It was the reasoned crisis of his soul
Against more days of inescapable thrall,
Against infrangibly wired and blind trench wall
Curtained with fire, roofed in with creeping fire,
Slow grazing fire, that would not burn him whole
But kept him for death's promises and scoff,
And life's half-promising, and both their riling.

IV The Epilogue

With him they buried the muzzle his teeth had kissed,
And truthfully wrote the mother, 'Tim died smiling.'

2. Bullet.

126.

Mental Cases

Wilfred Owen

Who are these? Why sit they here in twilight?
Wherefore rock they, purgatorial shadows,
Drooping tongues from jaws that slob their relish,
Baring teeth that leer like skulls’ teeth wicked?
Stroke on stroke of pain,—but what slow panic,
Gouged these chasms round their fretted sockets?
Ever from their hair and through their hands’ palms
Misery swelters. Surely we have perished
Sleeping, and walk hell; but who these hellish?
    —These are men whose minds the Dead have ravished.
Memory fingers in their hair of murders,
Multitudinous murders they once witnessed.
Wading sloughs of flesh these helpless wander,
Treading blood from lungs that had loved laughter.
Always they must see these things and hear them,
Batter of guns and shatter of flying muscles,
Carnage incomparable, and human squander
Rucked too thick for these men’s extrication.
    Therefore still their eyeballs shrink tormented
Back into their brains, because on their sense
Sunlight seems a blood-smear; night comes blood-black;
Dawn breaks open like a wound that bleeds afresh.
—Thus their heads wear this hilarious, hideous,
Awful falseness of set-smiling corpses.
—Thus their hands are plucking at each other;
Picking at the rope-knouts of their scourging;
Snatching after us who smote them, brother,
Pawing us who dealt them war and madness.

127.

Smile, Smile, Smile

Wilfred Owen

Head to limp head, the sunk-eyed wounded scanned
Yesterday's *Mail*; the casualties (typed small)
And (large) Vast Booty from our Latest Haul.
Also, they read of Cheap Homes, not yet planned,
'For', said the paper, 'when this war is done
The men's first instincts will be making homes.
Meanwhile their foremost need is aerodromes,
It being certain war has but begun.
Peace would do wrong to our undying dead,—
The sons we offered might regret they died
If we got nothing lasting in their stead.
We must be solidly indemnified.
Though all be worthy Victory which all bought,
We rulers sitting in this ancient spot
Would wrong our very selves if we forgot
The greatest glory will be theirs who fought,
Who kept this nation in integrity.'
Nation?—The half-limbed readers did not chafe
But smiled at one another curiously
Like secret men who know their secret safe.
(This is the thing they know and never speak,
That England one by one had fled to France,
Not many elsewhere now, save under France.)
Pictures of these broad smiles appear each week,
And people in whose voice real feeling rings
Say: How they smile! They're happy now, poor things.

128.

Anthem for Doomed Youth

Wilfred Owen

[1]

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle[2]?
— Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds[3].

1. Siegfried Sassoon helped Owen with the revision of this poem and suggested the word "anthem" for the title.
2. Jon Stallworthy notes in his edition of Owen's poetry, "WO was probably responding to the anonymous Prefatory Note to *Poems of Today: an Anthology* (1916), of which he possessed the December 1916 reprint: 'This book has been compiled in order that boys and girls, ...may also know something of the newer poetry of their own day. Most of the writers are living...while one of the youngest...has gone singing to lay down his life for his country's cause....there is no arbitrary isolation of one theme from another; they mingle and interpenetrate throughout, to the music of Pan's flute, and of Love's viol, and the bugle-call of Endeavour, and the passing-bells of Death.'"
3. Stallworthy reminds the reader that "the drawing down of blinds, now an almost-forgotten custom, indicated either that a funeral procession was passing or that there had been a death in the house. It was customary to keep the coffin in the house until taking it to church; it would be placed in the darkened parlour, with a pall and flowers on it and lighted candles nearby. Relatives and friends would enter the room to pay their last respects. The sestet of the poem, in fact, refers to a household in mourning."

129.

The Sentry

Wilfred Owen

We'd found an old Boche[1] dug-out, and he knew,
And gave us hell, for shell on frantic shell
Hammered on top, but never quite burst through.
Rain, guttering down in waterfalls of slime
Kept slush waist high, that rising hour by hour,
Choked up the steps too thick with clay to climb.
What murk of air remained stank old, and sour
With fumes of whizz-bangs[2], and the smell of men
Who'd lived there years, and left their curse in the den,
If not their corpses. . . .
There we herded from the blast
Of whizz-bangs, but one found our door at last.
Buffeting eyes and breath, snuffing the candles.
And thud! flump! thud! down the steep steps came thumping
And splashing in the flood, deluging muck—
The sentry's body; then his rifle, handles
Of old Boche bombs, and mud in ruck on ruck.
We dredged him up, for killed, until he whined
"O sir, my eyes—I'm blind—I'm blind, I'm blind!"
Coaxing, I held a flame against his lids
And said if he could see the least blurred light
He was not blind; in time he'd get all right.
"I can't," he sobbed. Eyeballs, huge-bulged like squids
Watch my dreams still; but I forgot him there
In posting next for duty, and sending a scout
To beg a stretcher somewhere, and floundering about
To other posts under the shrieking air.
    Those other wretches, how they bled and spewed,
And one who would have drowned himself for good,—
I try not to remember these things now.
Let dread hark back for one word only: how
Half-listening to that sentry's moans and jumps,
And the wild chattering of his broken teeth,

1. Disparaging term for a German, especially a German soldier.
2. A small-calibre World War I shell that, when discharged, travelled at such a high velocity that the sound of its flight was heard only an instant, if at all, before the sound of its explosion.

Renewed most horribly whenever crumps[3]
Pummelled the roof and slogged the air beneath—
Through the dense din, I say, we heard him shout
“I see your lights!” But ours had long died out.

3. A shell or bomb.

130.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

Disabled

1. Look at the following recruitment poster. Do you think Owen had it in mind when he wrote the last line of the poem?

Dulce et Decorum Est

1. Read Dr. Stuart Lee's Background to "Dulce et Decorum Est." Which one of the four do you prefer and why?
2. Notice the subtitle in the first: "To a Certain Poetess" Who might that be? Remember to click on the Stage 1 and 2 links at To visit Oxford Tutorial page for Dulce et Decorum Est

Futility

1. What has occurred just before the poem begins?
2. What scene do you visualize at the opening of the poem?
3. Who is speaking? What is his relation to "him"?
4. To whom is he speaking in line 1?
5. Why does the speaker want "him" moved into the sun?
6. What reasons does the speaker give for thinking the sun will help?
7. What is the connotation of "sun"? "snow"? "clay"?
8. What does "fatuous" mean?
9. Rhythm: How should we read the second stanza? What effect do the many hyphens have on the tempo of our reading?
10. How does the title relate to the theme?

S.I.W.

1. What does the acronym stand for? (These letters constitute an army acronym. See a good definition and discussion of acronyms)
2. Characterize Tim's father. In what way is it true that Tim died "smiling"?

Smile, Smile, Smile

1. To what popular wartime song is Owen alluding to in the title? What is meant by the *Mail*?



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?p=497

QR Code Smile Dmile Smile

Anthem for Doomed Youth

1. What kind of sonnet is this? What is its rhyme scheme?

Resources

- For those who wish to view a movie dealing with Owen and Sassoon, borrow Pat Barker's *Regeneration.* Please note that Pat Barker's novel *Regeneration* (1991) was filmed in 1997 (released in 1998 as *Behind the Lines* in United States). Those interested in learning more about Sassoon and Owen's time at the Scottish asylum for patients with shell shock (neurasthenia), might wish to borrow the DVD or video from a public or college library.
- Look at some of the seven extant archival manuscripts of "Anthem for Doomed Youth" on the First World War Digital Archive, taking note of significant variants.
- The Modernism Lab site at Yale University also has an interesting section on "Dulce et Decorum Est".
- Ian Brinton has written an excellent booklet on Wilfred Owen for the English Association. He discusses eight poems altogether, and we provide the links to those poems in our open text.
- "Exposure"
- "Insensibility"
- "The Send-Off"
- "Strange Meeting"

XVIII

Siegfried Sassoon (1886–1967)

131.

Biography



Figure 1: Siegried Sassoon

With war on the horizon, Siegfried Sassoon, a young Englishman whose life had up to that time been consumed with the protocol of fox-hunting, playing cricket, golfing and writing romantic verses, said goodbye to his idyllic life and rode off on his bicycle to join the army. Sassoon was perhaps the most innocent of the war poets. John Hildebidle has called him the "accidental hero."

Being an innocent, Sassoon's reaction to the realities of the war were all the more bitter and violent — both his reaction through his poetry and his reaction on the battlefield where, after the death of fellow officer David Thomas and his brother Hamo at Gallipoli, Sassoon earned the nickname "Mad Jack" for his near-suicidal exploits against the German lines. (In the early manifestation of his grief he believed that the Germans were entirely to blame.) As Paul Fussell said: "now he unleashed a talent for irony and satire and contumely that had been sleeping all during his pastoral youth." Sassoon also showed his

innocence by going public with his protest against the war as he grew to see that insensitive political leadership was the greater enemy than the Germans. Luckily, his friend and fellow poet Robert Graves convinced the review board that Sassoon was suffering from shell shock, and he was sent instead to the military hospital at Craiglockhart where he met and influenced Wilfred Owen.

Sassoon is a key figure in the study of the poetry of World War I: he brought with him to the war the idyllic pastoral background; he began by writing war poetry reminiscent of Rupert Brooke; he mingled with such war poets as Robert Graves and Edmund Blunden; he spoke out publicly against the war (and yet returned to it); he influenced and mentored the then unknown Wilfred Owen; he spent 30 years reflecting on the war through his memoirs; and at last he found peace in his religious faith. Some critics found his later poetry lacking in comparison to his war poems. Sassoon, identifying with Herbert and Vaughan, recognized and understood this: "my development has been entirely consistent and in character," he answered. "Almost all of them have ignored the fact that I am a religious poet."

Biography by Robert Means

Oxford Tutorials

Click on the Oxford First World War Poetry unit link and work your way through as many of the poems/letters as you wish.

Media Attributions

- Siegfried Sassoon © George Charles Beresford (1915) is licensed under a Public Domain license

132.

Counter-Attack

Click on the link to the Oxford First World War Poetry unit on Sassoon's "Counter-Attack" and work your way through as many of the poems/letters as you wish.

Explanatory Notes not covered in Oxford tutorials.

- Lewis gun: A light machine gun, designed in 1911 by U.S. Army Col. Isaac Lewis, and widely used by British and Empire forces from 1915 onwards.
- Sap: A covering over a trench; the extension of a trench from within the trench itself to a point beneath an enemy's fortifications.
- Allemands: Germans, from the French "Allemand,"; German: sometimes referred to as the "Alleyman."
- Five-nines: 5.9-calibre shells.
- Fire-step: A board or ledge in a trench, upon which soldiers stand when firing.

133.

Does it Matter?

Click on the Bartleby link and work your way through Sassoon's*Does it Matter?*

134.

The Death Bed

Click on the link to the Oxford First World War Poetry unit on Sassoon's "The Death Bed" and work your way through as many of the poems/letters as you wish.

Explanatory Notes not covered in Oxford tutorials.

- Weir: A dam in a stream; an enclosure in a waterway for taking fish.

135.

Base Details and Glory of Women

Click on the link to the Bartleby links and work your way through Sasson's *Base Details* and *Glory of Women.*

Base Details

Explanatory Notes not covered in Oxford tutorials.

See discussion of this poem in the "How to analyze a poem" appendix.

Glory of Women

Explanatory Notes not covered in Oxford tutorials.

"You make us shells": A reference to the employment of women in munitions factories during the war.

136.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

General Question

1. Interestingly, Sassoon was entitled to write the initials M.C. after his name. What do these initials stand for? (Hint: it doesn't mean "master of ceremonies.")

Counter-Attack

1. What does the image in line 8 of Stanza 2 describe? One critic is reminded of the Goya painting *The Colossus*, which described another war scene (the Peninsular War). What do you think?
2. Note that in the published version of the poem (*Collected Poems*: 1908-1956, Faber), the lines 7-13 are indented. What is the effect or purpose of this indentation?

The Death-Bed

1. What is the poem's setting? See stanza 3.

Does It Matter?

1. Who is talking?
2. What type of irony—situational, dramatic or verbal, pervades the poem?
3. What are the dreams from the pit?
4. What is the poem's theme?

Base Details

1. Identify the speaker.

2. Why are the majors "scarlet"?
3. Give all noun and adjective meanings for "base." Eliminate those that are clearly unintended.
4. Define "details."
5. Why did Sassoon use the word "scrap" and not "battle"?
6. What is the effect of the spondaic foot (aka spondee) at line 9?
7. Why did Sassoon use the word "toddle" in line 10?

Essay Questions

In a brief essay, discuss how irony contributes to theme in "Does It Matter?"

How does diction contribute to theme in "Base Details"?

Contrast Sassoon's early war poem "Absolution" with any of his poems in the Oxford tutorial or from *Counter-Attack and Other Poems* (Project Bartleby)

Pay particular attention to diction.

Resources

- An excellent seven-page pamphlet by Ian Brinton on Sassoon, dealing with poems which Sassoon proudly referred to as "an antidote to the glorification of 'the supreme sacrifice' and such-like prevalent phrases".
- "From Mametz Wood to the General": An informative and wide-ranging podcast lecture by Professor Jean Moorcroft Wilson, biographer of Siegfried Sassoon. In it she mentions some unpublished Sassoon poems she recently discovered, one of which shows an uncharacteristically romantic attitude to war, reminiscent of Rupert Brooke's "III: The Dead".
- BBC *In Our Time* podcast on Siegfried Sassoon.
- "Declaration against the war": Read carefully this highly controversial manifesto of Sassoon's (July 1917), which was read to the House of Commons in London and was considered by some to be an act of treason. Sassoon narrowly escaped death by firing squad for his actions.
- U.K. World War I recruitment posters.
- Essays on Sassoon from Modernism Lab, Yale University.
- Sample student essay on a Sassoon poem ("Glory of Women").

XIX

Isaac Rosenberg (1890–1918)

137.

Biography



Figure 1: Isaac Rosenberg

On November 25, 1890, Isaac Rosenberg was born in Bristol, England. His father and mother, Dovber and Hacha Davidov Rosenberg, had recently arrived from Russia and settled in London's Jewish ghetto. Dovber (who changed his name to Barnett Rosenberg) opened a butcher shop, but the authorities soon seized it and he spent the remainder of his life as an itinerant peddler. Isaac grew up in extreme poverty and worked in the afternoons as an apprentice engraver. In the evenings, however, he pursued art, and by 1907 he had enrolled in night classes at Birkbeck College. His talent as a painter garnered him a number of student awards and allowed him in 1911 to receive a sponsorship for the Slade School, an important centre for English painting.

While at the Slade School, Rosenberg's interests gravitated increasingly toward poetry. He began to send his poems to editors and journals, and in 1912, at his own expense, he published *Night and Day*.

This 24-page pamphlet showed a strong Romantic influence, particularly from the poems of Keats and Shelley. It was at this time that Rosenberg became acquainted with Edward Marsh, a leading figure in the art world of London. Marsh encouraged Rosenberg's writing and purchased some of his paintings; he also introduced him to many of the important writers and painters of the day such as Ezra Pound and T. E. Hulme. Through this connection Rosenberg came into contact with Imagism and although he did not become an Imagist himself, he did learn from its techniques.

In 1913, Rosenberg's health began to fail and he spent the following year in Cape Town, South Africa. He returned to England in 1915 and again self-published a pamphlet of the poems he had written in the preceding two years. This pamphlet, entitled *Youth*, demonstrates the influence of the Imagists and also shows Rosenberg developing a more distinctive and mature style. Lacking any job prospects and with the war in Germany heating up, Rosenberg decided to enlist in the Bantam Battalion of 12 Suffolk Regiment. He was sent to the Western Front in 1916, and he never rose above the rank of private.

Rosenberg was a delicate and small man in poor health and found himself in an army rife with anti-Semitism. Ironically, he developed under these circumstances into one of the finest poets of his generation. His poems from this time rival those of England's most famous "trench poets," Wilfred Owen, Robert Graves, and Rupert Brooke. Rosenberg's poems, such as "Dead Man's Dump" or the often-anthologized "Break of Day in the Trenches," are characterized by a profound combination of compassion, clarity, stoicism, and irony.

On April 1, 1918, while on night patrol south of Arras, France, Rosenberg was killed in battle. His body was never found. His poems were posthumously collected and published in London in 1922. In 1979, all of his work was gathered and published in *The Collected Works of Isaac Rosenberg: Poetry, Prose, Letters, Painting, and Drawings* (Oxford University Press).

Oxford Tutorials

Click on the Oxford First World War Poetry unit link and work your way through as many of the poems/letters as you wish.

Media Attributions

138.

Returning, We Hear the Larks

Isaac Rosenberg

Sombre the night is.
And though we have our lives, we know
What sinister threat lurks there.
 Dragging these anguished limbs, we only know
This poison- blasted track opens on our camp –
On a little safe sleep.
 But hark! joy – joy – strange joy.
Lo! heights of night ringing with unseen larks.
Music showering our upturned list'ning faces.
 Death could drop from the dark
As easily as song –
But song only dropped,
Like a blind man's dreams on the sand
By dangerous tides,
Like a girl's dark hair for she dreams no ruin lies there,
Or her kisses where a serpent hides.

139.

Break of Day in the Trenches

Break of Day in the Trenches is available here.
You are encouraged to read all the other poems, including the Donne and Blake poems, but read at least "Break of Day in the Trenches."

Exercises

1. Line 2, Druid: Member of ancient Celtic priesthood, appearing in legends as magicians or wizards.
2. Line 5, Parapet: Wall protecting a trench.

140.

Dead Man's Dump

Isaac Rosenberg

The plunging limbers[1] over the shattered track
Racketed with their rusty freight[2],
Stuck out like many crowns of thorns,
And the rusty stakes like sceptres old
To stay the flood of brutish men
Upon our brothers dear.
 The wheels lurched over sprawled dead
But pained them not, though their bones crunched;
Their shut mouths made no moan,
They lie there huddled, friend and foeman,
Man born of man, and born of woman;
And shells go crying over them
From night till night and now.
 Earth has waited for them,
All the time of their growth
Fretting for their decay:
Now she has them at last!
In the strength of her strength
Suspended – stopped and held.
 What fierce imaginings their dark souls lit?
Earth! Have they gone into you?
Somewhere they must have gone,
And flung on your hard back
Is their souls' sack,
Emptied of God-ancestralled essences.
Who hurled them out? Who hurled?
 None saw their spirits' shadow shake the grass,
Or stood aside for the half-used life to pass
Out of those doomed nostrils and the doomed mouth,
When the swift iron burning bee
Drained the wild honey of their youth.
 What of us who, flung on the shrieking pyre,
Walk, our usual thoughts untouched,

1. The shafts of a cart or carriage, here carrying barbed wire. See J.W. Brooke archival photos of cart and mules or horses drawing the cart. Brushwood track was necessary because of the mud.
2. Barbed wire, used to protect the trench against enemy raiders. See photo "Barbed wire gate to let down to form a block against raiders."

Our lucky limbs as on ichor[3] fed,
Immortal seeming ever?
Perhaps when the flames beat loud on us,
A fear may choke in our veins
And the startled blood may stop.
The air is loud with death,
The dark air spurts with fire,
The explosions ceaseless are.
Timelessly now, some minutes past,
These dead strode time with vigorous life,
Till the shrapnel called 'An end!'
But not to all. In bleeding pangs
Some borne on stretchers dreamed of home,
Dear things, war-blotted from their hearts.
A man's brains splattered on
A stretcher-bearer's face;
His shook shoulders slipped their load,
But when they bent to look again
The drowning soul was sunk too deep
For human tenderness.
They left this dead with the older dead,
Stretched at the cross roads.
Burnt black by strange decay
Their sinister faces lie,
The lid over each eye;
The grass and coloured clay
More motion have than they,
Joined to the great sunk silences.
Here is one not long dead.
His dark hearing caught our far wheels,
And the choked soul stretched weak hands
To reach the living word the far wheels said;
The blood-dazed intelligence beating for light,
Crying through the suspense of the far torturing wheels
Swift for the end to break
Or the wheels to break,
Cried as the tide of the world broke over his sight,
'Will they come? Will they ever come?'
Even as the mixed hoofs of the mules,
The quivering-bellied mules,
And the rushing wheels all mixed
With his tortured upturned sight.
So we crashed round the bend,
We heard his weak scream,

3. The vital fluid in the veins of the gods in classical mythology.

We heard his very last sound,
And our wheels grazed his dead face.

This item is from The First World War Poetry Digital Archive, University of Oxford (https://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/education/tutorials/intro/rose); © *Poems of the First World War: 'Never Such Innocence', ed. Martin Stephen (Everyman, 1995)*, p. 148-50.

141.

Study Questions and Activities

Study Questions and Activities

Returning, We Hear the Larks

1. Give an example or two of irony in this poem.

Break of Day in the Trenches

1. Listen to the audio clip of the poem.
2. What lines differ from that in your Oxford tutorial? Compare the open text version (which is the same as that published in the Norton and Longman anthologies) with the original version published in *Poetry* magazine, 1916. Which do you prefer? You will find an earlier version (see page 6, *Poetry* magazine) as it is reproduced in the following link: "Collecting Isaac Rosenberg". You will also find it under variants here.
3. Are there any elements of the pastoral in the poem?
4. Look up "crown of thorns" and "sceptre" in an appropriate reference source. What is ironic about their use here?
5. How does this poem differ from other apostrophes to rodents or insects, such as Burns's "To a Mouse" or "To a Louse"?
6. How does the phrase "haughty athletes" contribute to irony in the poem?

Dead Man's Dump

1. Find an example of alliteration, apostrophe and personification.
2. What does the metaphor "swift iron humming bee" suggest?
3. In an earlier version, the 8th stanza begins, "Maniac earth!" It does not appear in our version in the Oxford tutorial. Why do you think it was later removed from the poem? Would you have retained it? Why or why not?

Further Activity:

Browse the very informative National Archive Exhibit on Isaac Rosenberg. In addition to biographical and historical material, it contains the texts and holograph (hand-written) images of three more Rosenberg poems: "The Immortal", "Spring", and "Of any old man".

Essay Topics

1. "Where Rosenberg differs from Owen and Sassoon is in his avoidance of a shrill rhetoric that tends to drown the private voice in a blast of moral outrage" (Lisa Broadway). Discuss.
2. Download the archival letter from Isaac Rosenberg to Edward Marsh, October 1915.
3. The original of the letter to Edward Marsh is now in the Berg Collection, New York Public Library. Experiment with the various images, but click on "Maximum resolution" and "Fit to width." Then print it, after using the zoom feature if you have trouble deciphering it. Next, prepare your own edition of the letter, with footnotes identifying Marsh and other necessary explanatory details, especially the reference to "Falstaff's scarecrows." Your goal is to provide an accurate transcription as well as useful explanatory footnotes. You should also read "Collecting Isaac Rosenberg". It will give needed background and will help you with some of the hard-to-decipher words in the archival photo.

XX

Rupert Brooke (1887–1915)

142.

Biography

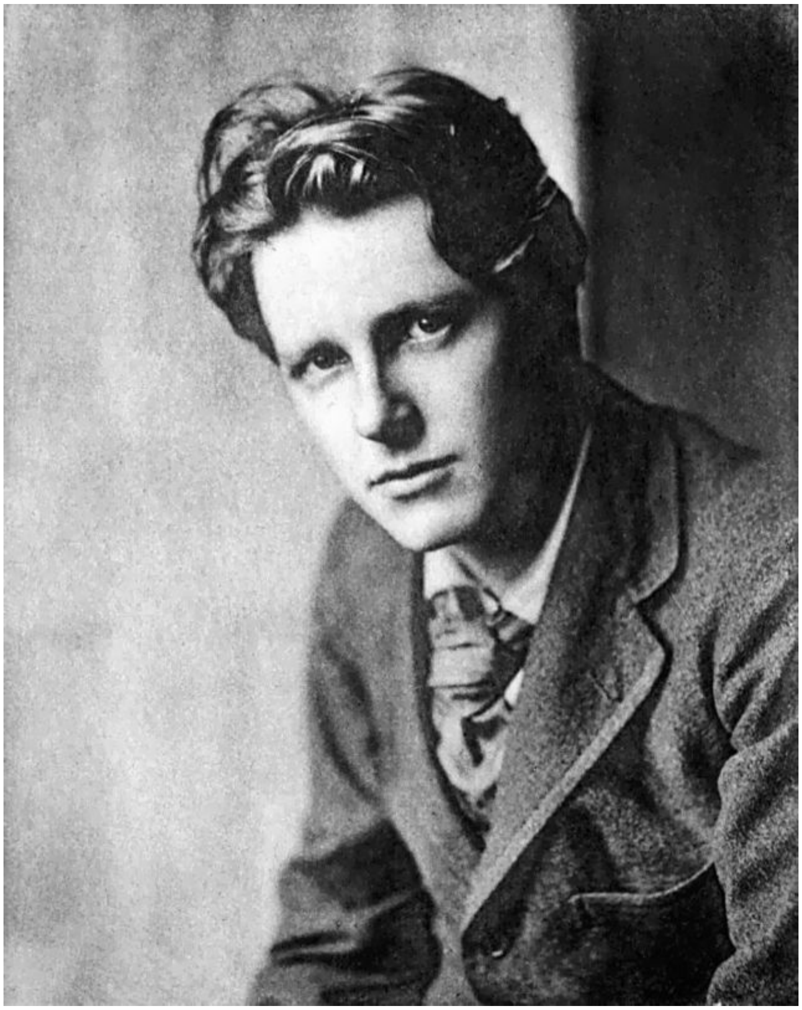


Figure 1: Rupert Brooke

English poet Rupert Chawner Brooke was born on August 3, 1887. The son of Rugby School's housemaster, Brooke excelled in both academics and athletics. He entered his father's school at the age of 14. A lover of verse since the age of nine, he won the school poetry prize in 1905.

A year later, he attended King's College, Cambridge, where he was known for his striking good looks, charm, and intellect. While at Cambridge, he developed an interest in acting and was president of the University Fabian Society. Brooke published his first poems in 1909; his first book, *Poems*, appeared in 1911. While working on his dissertation on John Webster and Elizabethan dramatists, he lived in the house that he made famous by his poem "The Old Vicarage, Grantchester."

Popular in both literary and political circles, he befriended Winston Churchill, Henry James, and members of the Bloomsbury Group, including Virginia Woolf. Although he was popular, Brooke had a

troubled love life. Between 1908 and 1912, he fell in love with three women: Noel Olivier, youngest daughter of the governor of Jamaica; Ka Cox, who preceded him as president of the Fabian Society; and Cathleen Nesbitt, a British actress. None of the relationships were long lasting. In 1912, after his third romance failed, Brooke left England to travel in France and Germany for several months.

Upon his return to England, Brooke received a fellowship at King's College and spent time in both Cambridge and London. In 1912, he compiled an anthology entitled *Georgian Poetry, 1911-12*, with Edward Marsh. The Georgian poets wrote in an anti-Victorian style, using rustic themes and subjects such as friendship and love. While critics viewed Brooke's poetry as too sentimental and lacking depth, they also considered his work a reflection of the mood in England during the years leading up to World War I.

After experiencing a mental breakdown in 1913, Brooke travelled again, spending several months in the United States, Canada, and the South Seas. During his trip, he wrote essays about his impressions for the *Westminster Gazette*, which were collected in *Letters from America* (1916). While in the South Seas, he wrote some of his best poems, including "Tiare Tahiti" and "The Great Lover."

He returned to England at the outbreak of World War I and enlisted in the Royal Naval Division. His most famous work, the sonnet sequence *1914 and Other Poems*, appeared in 1915. On April 23, 1915, after taking part in the Antwerp Expedition, he died of blood poisoning from a mosquito bite while en route to Gallipoli with the navy. He was buried on the island of Skyros in the Aegean Sea.

Following his death, Brooke, who was already famous, became a symbol in England of the tragic loss of talented youth during the war.

Media Attributions

143.

Oxford JISC Tutorial: Rupert Brooke

Oxford Tutorials

Work your way through the following Oxford Tutorial on Rupert Brooke.

144.

Study Questions and Activities

Study Questions and Activities

1. Compare any of the sonnets here by Brooke with a poem by either Rosenberg, Owen, or Sassoon. Focus on the differing attitudes to war in the two poets chosen. You might wish to consider why Rosenberg particularly disliked Brooke's war poetry.

XXI

Sean O’Casey (1880–1964)

145.

Biography



Figure 1: Sean O'Casey Portrait

Baptized as John Casey, the youngest of 13 children, O'Casey was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1880 to a Catholic father and Protestant mother (the Susan Casside described in the first volume of his autobiography, *I Knock at the Door*) and in whose religion he was raised. As a member of the Gaelic League, he campaigned for Anglican services to be delivered in Irish. By age 14, he had found work as a stockroom labourer, and he continued as a manual labourer until 1925, when, after the success of *Juno and the Paycock*, he was able to devote himself full-time to writing.

A strong trades-union advocate and lifelong socialist, he took part in Jim Larkin's seven-month-long Lockout Strike in 1913, and later became secretary of the Irish Citizen Army, drafting its constitution. But he refused to take part in the Easter Rebellion of 1916, disagreeing with the militant nationalist Padraic Pearse and other members of the Irish Volunteer Army, who advocated bloodshed in the effort

to shake off British rule. His play *The Plough and the Stars* (1926)—the third play in his *Dublin Trilogy* (preceded by *Shadow of a Gunman* in 1923 and *Juno and the Paycock* in 1924—was typically critical of the politics of nationalism, and its first performance at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin created almost as much of a riot as had Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*, leading W. B. Yeats to exclaim to an unruly audience: "You have again rocked the cradle of genius."

After the successful run of *Juno and the Paycock* in London, O'Casey travelled to London in 1926 to receive the Hawthornden Prize for this play. There he met his future wife, the Irish actress Eileen Carey Reynolds, and the couple settled in England in 1927. In 1930, Alfred Hitchcock directed a talking-film version of *Juno and the Paycock*, and again, public outcry resulted, including riots in Limerick, mainly because of O'Casey's consistent refusal to glorify the violence of the nationalist movement, instead mocking the romanticization of war. "In *Juno and the Paycock*, he fully explores the Irish people and their culture in a complex way, exploring both the tragic and comic sides of each of his characters as each of them struggles for a better life."

O'Casey died in Torquay, England, in 1964 after suffering a heart attack.

Media Attributions

146.

Explanatory Notes to Juno and the Paycock

Explanatory Notes to Act 1

1. Jumper. A cardigan sweater.

2. Beyant Finglas. Beyond Finglas, a suburb on Dublin's northside.

3. Diehard . A member of the IRA who rejected the treaty creating the Irish Free State in 1922.

4. Samaritan . See Luke 10: 30-36. The stranger who helped the man who had fallen among thieves; thus an exemplar of Christian charity.

5. Novena. In Roman Catholic devotions, a prayer for some special object or occasion extended over nine days.

6. Easter Week . Reference to the 1916 Rising led by Padraic Pearse and James Connolly.

7. In 1920, the fight in O'Connell St. occurred during the Irish war of independence.

8. Free State. Name of the former state of southern Ireland 1922–37, established as a result of the Anglo-Irish Treaty (1921). It was replaced by Eire in 1937 and the Republic of Ireland in 1949.

9. Snug. A small drinking area in a public-house.

10. Rathmines. A suburb on the southside of Dublin.

11. "Sweet Spirit, hear my prayer!" From the romantic opera *Lurline* (1860) by Irish composer William Vincent Wallace (1812-1865).

12. Affeydavey. Juno's rendering of 'affadavit', a written statement confirmed by oath.

13. Juno. Roman goddess of women and childbirth, queen of the gods and of heaven. The peacock drove her chariot.

14. Deirdre of the Sorrows. In Irish myth, the beautiful Deirdre deserted King Conchubar to run off with Naoise, as prophesied, thus bringing ruin upon Ulster.

15. Killesther. A small suburb of Dublin on the northside.

16.Collier. A ship used to transport coal.

17. Forage, look out for.

18. Hod. A tray or trough with a pole handle and that is borne on the shoulder for carrying bricks, mortar or similar loads.

19. Chiselurs. Children.

20. Chassis. Chaos.

21. Trench coats were commonly worn by members of the IRA.

22. Bog of Allen . An extensive area of bog, now partially reclaimed, twenty-five miles west-southwest of Dublin.

23. *The Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, *The Wild Duck*. Three tragedies by Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), mistakenly considered by Boyle to be children's books

24. *Elizabeth, or the Exile of Siberia*, a popular tale by Madame Sophil Cottin (1770-1807).

25. Virol. A malt-extract given to children as a health food.

26. Wicklow. A county and town in the Mid-East region of Ireland.

27. '47 from seizin' the corn.' The height of the Great Famine in 1847.

28. Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-1891). Irish Nationalist politician. He became President of the Home Rule Party in 1877, but his career was ruined when his affair with Katherine O'Shea was exposed in 1890.

29. Fenians. The Irish Republican Brotherhood, founded in 1858 as a radical, militarist form of nationalism.

30. Confraternity. Roman Catholic organization of lay people created for the purpose of promoting special works of Christian charity or piety, and approved by the Church hierarchy.

31. 'How can a man die betther…' Lines from Thomas Macaulay (1800-1859) *Lays of Ancient Rome* , "Horatius at the Bridge" (1842).

32. collogin'. Conspiring.

33. Ireland only half free. A reference to the Treaty of 1921 which resulted in the partition of Ireland.

34. Santry . A Dublin suburb on the northside.

35. Sorra many. Not many.

36. Charles Bentham, N.T. National-school teacher.

37. *Requiescat in pace*. Latin. Rest in peace.

38. Guh sayeree jeea ayera. Phonetic spelling for Gaelic prayer, i.e., "God Save Ireland".

Notes to Act 2

39. Are you there, Mor…ee…ar…i…teee. This song became popular through the patriotic singer Gerard Crofts in the internment camps set up after the 1916 Rebellion. Moriarity is a member of the D.M.P. (Dublin Metropolitan Police).

40. bob . Five shillings.

41. 'I met with Napper Tandy.' A line from the ballad "The Wearing of the Green." James Napper Tandy (1740-1803) was an Irish patriot.

42. the heart o' the rowl. A good fellow.

43. *Saggart Aroon*. Gaelic. "Dear priest." Joxer is probably referring to a variant of a patriotic poem by John Banim (1798-1842), "Soggarth Aroon".

44. *Story of Ireland* (1867). A popular history by A.M. Sullivan (1830-1874), one of the founders of the Home Rule Party. Boyle confuses the author with Irish-American boxer John L. Sullivan (1858-1918).

45. Boney's *Oraculum.* Napoleon's *Oraculum* was a popular book in the 19th and early 20th century. See British Museum Cataloguev., 168, column 624, the *Oraculum* (1822) is described: "The book of fate, formerly in the possession of Napoleon…and now first rendered into English, from a German translation of an ncient Egyptian manuscript…." Described in *The National Union Catalogue* (V, 405, 173): ""*Napoleon's Oraculum and dream book* (1884): containing the great oracle of human destiny. Also the true meaning of almost any kind of dreams…."

46. Allanna. Gaelic. "My baby."

47. Consols. Government securities.

48. Theosophist. One who aims at the knowledge of God by means of intuition and contemplation. The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 by Mme Helena Blavatsky.

49. Charles Chaplin (1889-1977). London-born Hollywood comic actor.

50. Thomas Edwin "Tom" Mix (1880-1940).The first major star of Hollywood westerns.

51. *Nil desperandum*. Never despair (Latin).

52. ‘Home to Our Mountains.’ Aria from Verdi’s *Il Trovatore* (1853).

53. ‘If I were a blackbird.’ A traditional Irish song about a woman jilted by a sailor.

54. Black and Tans. A force of temporary constables recruited in Britain in 1919 to fight the Irish Republican Army. Their nickname referred to the colour of their khaki uniforms. They became infamous for their attacks on civilians.

55.‘She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps.’ Song composed by Irish poet Thomas Moore (1779-1852), best-known for “The Minstrel Boy.”

56. ‘I have heard the mavis singin’ his love song to the morn.’ A popular love song (ca 1850), by Charles Jefferys (1805-1867).

57. C.I.D. Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in the Irish Free State was an armed, plain clothed counter insurgency police unit that operated during the Irish Civil War.

58.Civic Guards. Irish police force.

Notes to Act 3

59. Sorrow mend you. Good enough for you.

60. *Messenger.* A Roman Catholic magazine.

61. ‘Man’s inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn.’ From the Robert Burns poem “Man was made to mourn: A Dirge” (1784).

62. Child of Mary. A member of a Roman Catholic confraternity devoted to the Virgin Mary.

63. The blinds is down. A reference to the custom of lowering the blinds when there has been a death in the house or when a funeral procession was passing the house. See the last line of Wilfred Owen’s poem “Anthem for Doomed Youth” and in D.H. Lawrence, “The Horse Dealer’s Daughter.”

64. Flying columns. Units of mobile IRA personnel, engaged in guerrilla tactics.

65. Breathes there a man with soul so dead.’ From Sir Walter Scott “The Lay of the Last Minstrel” (1805).

66.Volunteer. Irish Volunteer Army, established in 1913 by Irish nationalists.

67. ‘Willie Reilly and his own Colleen Bawn’ A popular story of 18th century Catholic-Protestant love, *Willy Reilly and His Dear Colleen Bawn* by William Carleton (1855) a version of which was filmed in 1920.

147.

Juno and the Paycock

Sean O'Casey

Characters in the Play

Capt. Jack Boyle
Juno Boyle, his wife
Johnny Boyle
Mary Boyle
"Joxer" Daly
Mrs. Maisie Madigan
"Needle" Nugent, a tailor
Mrs. Tancred
Jerry Devine
Charles Bentham, a school teacher
An Irregular Mobilizer
Two Irregulars
A coal-block vendor
A sewing machine man
Two furniture removal men
Two Neighbors

Scene

Act I. — The living apartment of a two-roomed tenancy of the Boyle family, in a tenement house in Dublin.

Act II.—The same.

Act III.—The same.

A few days elapse between Acts I and II, and two months between Acts II and III.

During Act III the curtain is lowered for a few minutes to denote the lapse of one hour.

Period of the play, 1922.

148.

Juno and the Paycock: ACT I

Sean O'Casey

The living room of a two room tenancy occupied by the Boyle family in a tenement house in Dublin. Left, a door leading to another part of the house; left of door a window looking into the street; at back a dresser; farther to right at back, a window looking into the back of the house. Between the window and the dresser is a picture of the Virgin; below the picture, on a bracket, is a crimson bowl in which a floating votive light is burning. Farther to the right is a small bed partly concealed by cretonne hangings strung on a twine. To the right is the fireplace; near the fire place is a door leading to the other room. Beside the fireplace is a box containing coal. On the mantelshelf is an alarm clock lying on its face. In a corner near the window looking into the back is a galvanized bath. A table and some chairs. On the table are breakfast things for one. A teapot is on the hob and a frying-pan stands inside the fender. There are a few books on the dresser and one on the table. Leaning against the dresser is a long-handled shovel—the kind invariably used by labourers when turning concrete or mixing mortar. Johnny Boyle is sitting crouched beside the fire. Mary with her jumper[1] *off—it is lying on the back of a chair—is arranging her hair before a tiny mirror perched on the table. Beside the mirror is stretched out the morning paper, which she looks at when she isn't gazing into the mirror. She is a well-made and good-looking girl of twenty-two. Two forces are working in her mind—one, through the circumstances of her life, pulling her back; the other, through the influence of books she has read, pushing her forward. The opposing forces are apparent in her speech and her manners, both of which are degraded by her environment, and improved by her acquaintance—slight though it be—with literature. The time is early forenoon.*

Mary: (*looking at the paper*). On a little by-road, out beyant Finglas,[2], he was found.

[Mrs. Boyle *enters by the door on right; she has been shopping and carries a small parcel in her hand. She is forty-five years of age, and twenty years ago she must have been a pretty woman; but her face has now assumed that look which ultimately settles down upon the faces of the women of the working-class; a look of listless monotony and harassed anxiety, blending with an expression of mechanical resistance. Were circumstances favourable, she would probably be a handsome, active and clever woman*.]

Mrs. Boyle: Isn't he come in yet?

Mary: No, mother.

Mrs. Boyle: Oh, he'll come in when he likes; struttin' about the town like a paycock with Joxer, I suppose. I hear all about Mrs. Tancred's son is in this mornin's paper.

Mary: The full details are in it this mornin'; seven wounds he had — one entherin' the neck, with an exit wound beneath the left shoulder-blade; another in the left breast penethratin' the heart, an'…

Johnny: (*springing up from the fire*). Oh, quit that readin' for God's sake! Are yous losin' all your feelin's? It'll soon be that none of you'll read anythin' that's not about butcherin'! [*He goes quickly into*

1. A cardigan sweater.
2. Beyant Finglas. Beyond Finglas, a suburb on Dublin's northside.

the room on left.

Mary: He's gettin' very sensitive, all of a sudden!

Mrs. Boyle: I'll read it myself, Mary, by an' by, when I come home. Everybody's sayin' that he was a Diehard[3] — thanks be to God that Johnny had nothin' to do with him this long time….(Opening the parcel and taking out some sausages, which she places on a plate) Ah, then, if that father o' yours doesn't come in soon for his breakfast, he may go without any; I'll not wait much longer for him.

Mary: Can't you let him get it himself when he comes in?

Mrs. Boyle: Yes, an' let him bring in Joxer Daly along with him? Ay, that's what he'd like an' that's what he's waitin' for — till he thinks I'm gone to work, an' then sail in with the boul' Joxer, to burn all the coal an' dhrink all the tea in the place, to show them what a good Samaritan[4] he is! But I'll stop here till he comes in, if I have to wait till tomorrow mornin'.

Voice of Johnny inside**.** Mother!

Mrs. Boyle: Yis?

Johnny: Bring us in a dhrink o' wather.

Mrs. Boyle: Bring in that fella a dhrink o' wather, for God's sake, Mary.

Mary: Isn't he big an' able enough to come out an' get it himself?

Mrs. Boyle: If you weren't well yourself you'd like somebody to bring you in a dhrink o' wather. [*She brings in drink and returns*.]

Mrs. Boyle: Isn't it terrible to have to be waitin' this way! You'd think he was bringin' twenty poun's a week into the house the way he's going on. He wore out the Health Insurance long ago, he's afther wearin' out the unemployment dole, an', now, he's thryin' to wear out me! An' constantly singin', no less, when he ought always to be on his knees offerin' up a Novena[5] for a job!

Mary (*trying a ribbon fillet-wise around her head*): him I don't like this ribbon, ma; I think I'll wear the green — it looks better than the blue.

Mrs. Boyle: Ah, wear whatever ribbon you like, girl, only don't be botherin' me. I don't know what a girl on strike wants to be wearin' a ribbon round her head for, or silk stockin's on her legs either; it's wearin' them things that make the employers think they're givin' yous too much money.

Mary: The hour is past now when we'll ask the employers' permission to wear what we like.

Mrs. Boyle: I don't know why you wanted to walk out for Jennie Claffey; up to this you never had a good word for her.

Mary: What's the use of belongin' to a Trades Union if you won't stand up for your principles? Why did they sack her? It was a clear case of victimization. We couldn't let her walk the streets, could we?

Mrs. Boyle: No, of course yous couldn't — yous wanted to keep her company. Wan victim wasn't enough. When the employers sacrifice wan victim, the Trades Union go wan betther be sacrificin' a hundred.

Mary: It doesn't matther what you say, ma — a principle's a principle.

Mrs. Boyle: Yis; an' when I go into oul' Murphy's tomorrow, an' he gets to know that, instead o' payin' all, I'm goin' to borry more, what'll he say when I tell him a principle's a principle? What'll we do if he refuses to give us any more on tick?

Mary: He daren't refuse — if he does, can't you tell him he's paid?

Mrs. Boyle: It's lookin' as if he was paid, whether he refuses or no.

[Johnny *appears at the door on left. He can be plainly seen now; he is a thin, delicate fellow, something younger than Mary. He has evidently gone through a rough time. His face is pale and drawn; there is a tremulous look of indefinite fear in his eyes. The left sleeve of his coat is empty, and he walks*

3. A member of the IRA who rejected the treaty creating the Irish Free State in 1922.
4. See Luke 10: 30-36. The stranger who helped the man who had fallen among thieves; thus an exemplar of Christian charity.
5. In Roman Catholic devotions, a prayer for some special object or occasion extended over nine days.

with a slight halt.]

Johnny: I was lyin' down; I thought yous were gone. Oul' Simon Mackay is thrampin' about like a horse over me head, an' I can't sleep with him — they're like thunder-claps in me brain! The curse o' — God forgive me for goin' to curse!

Mrs. Boyle: There, now; go back an' lie down again an' I'll bring you in a nice cup o' tay.

Johnny: Tay, tay, tay! You're always thinkin' o' tay. If a man was dyin', you'd thry to make him swally a cup o' tay! [*He goes back.*

Mrs. Boyle: I don't know what's goin' to be done with him. The bullet he got in the hip in Easter Week[6] was bad enough; but the bomb that shatthered his arm in the fight in O'Connell Street[7] put the finishin' touch on him. I knew he was makin' a fool of himself. God knows I went down on me bended knees to him not to go agen the Free State.[8]

Mary: He stuck to his principles, an', no matther how you may argue, ma, a principle's a principle.

*Voice of Johnny***:** Is Mary goin' to stay here?

Mary: No, I'm not goin' to stay here; you can't expect me to be always at your beck an' call, can you?

Johnny: I won't stop here be meself!

Mrs. Boyle: Amn't I nicely handicapped with the whole o' yous! I don't know what any o' yous ud do without your ma. (*To* Johnny) Your father'll be here in a minute, an' if you want anythin', he'll get it for you.

Johnny: I hate assin' him for anythin' — He hates to be assed to stir — Is the light lightin' before the picture o' the Virgin?

Mrs. Boyle: Yis, Yis! The wan inside to St. Anthony isn't enough, but he must have another wan to the Virgin here!

[Jerry Devine *enters hastily. He is about twenty-five, well set, active and earnest. He is a type, becoming very common now in the Labour Movement, of a mind knowing enough to make the mass of his associates, who know less, a power, and too little to broaden that power for the benefit of all. Mary seizes her jumper and runs hastily into room left.*]

Jerry: (*breathless*) Where's the Captain, Mrs. Boyle, where's the Captain?

Mrs. Boyle: You may well ass a body that: he's wherever Joxer Daly is — dhrinkin' in some snug[9] or another.

Jerry: Father Farrell is just afther stoppin' to tell me to run up an' get him to go to the new job that's goin' on in Rathmines;[10] his cousin is foreman o' the job, an' Father Farrell was speakin' to him about poor Johnny an' his father bein' idle so long, an' the foreman told Father Farrell to send the Captain up an' he'd give him a start — I wondher where I'd find him?

Mrs. Boyle: You'll find he's ayther in Ryan's or Foley's.

Jerry: I'll run round to Ryan's — I know it's a great house o' Joxer's. [*He rushes out.*

Mrs. Boyle: (*piteously)* There now, he'll miss that job, or I know for what! If he gets win' o' the word, he'll not come back till evenin', so that it'll be too late. There'll never be any good got out o' him so long as he goes with that shouldher-shruggin' Joxer. I killin' meself workin', an' he sthruttin' about from mornin' till night like a paycock!

6. Reference to The Easter Rebellion of 1916 led by Padraic Pearse and James Connolly.
7. In 1920, during the Irish War of Independence.
8. Name of the former state of southern Ireland 1922–37, established as a result of the Anglo-Irish Treaty (1921). It was replaced by Eire in 1937 and the Republic of Ireland in 1949.
9. Small drinking area in a public-house.
10. A suburb on the southside of Dublin.

[*The steps of two persons are heard coming up a fight of stairs. They are the footsteps of Captain Boyle and Joxer. Captain Boyle is singing in a deep, sonorous, self-honouring voice.*]

The Captain: Sweet Spirit, hear me prayer! Hear — oh — hear — me prayer — hear , oh, hear — Oh, he…ar — oh, he…ar — me — pray…er![11]

Joxer: (*outside*) Ah, that's a darlin' song, a daaarlin' song!

Mrs. Boyle: (*viciously*). Sweet spirit hear his prayer! Ah, then, I'll take me solemn affeydavey,[12] it's not for a job he's prayin'! [*She sits down on the bed so that the cretonne hangings hide her from the view of those entering.*

[The Captain *comes in. He is a man of about sixty; stout, grey-haired and stocky. His neck is short, and his head looks like a stone ball that one sometimes sees on top of a gate-post. His cheeks, reddish-purple, are puffed out, as if he were always repressing an almost irrepressible ejaculation. On his upper lip is a crisp, tightly cropped moustache; he carries himself with the upper part of his body slightly thrown back, and his stomach slightly thrust forward. His walk is a slow, consequential strut. His clothes are dingy, and he wears a faded seaman's-cap with a glazed peak.*]

Boyle: (*to* Joxer, *who is still outside*). Come on, come on in, Joxer; she's gone out long ago, man. If there's nothing else to be got, we'll furrage out a cup o' tay, anyway. It's the only bit I get in comfort when she's away. 'Tisn't Juno[13] should be her pet name at all, but Deirdre of the Sorras,[14] for she's always grousin'.

[Joxer *steps cautiously into the room. He may be younger than the Captain but he looks a lot older. His face is like a bundle of crinkled paper; his eyes have a cunning twinkle; he is spare and loosely built; he has a habit of constantly shrugging his shoulders with a peculiar twitching movement, meant to be ingratiating. His face is invariably ornamented with a grin.*]

Joxer: It's a terrible thing to be tied to a woman that's always grousin'. I don't know how you stick it — it ud put years on me. It's a good job she has to be so ofen away, for (*with a shrug*) when the cat's away, the mice can play!

Boyle: (*with a commanding and complacent gesture*). Pull over to the fire, Joxer, an' we'll have a cup o' tay in a minute.

Joxer: Ah, a cup o' tay's a darlin' thing, a daaarlin' thing — the cup that cheers but doesn't… [Joxer's *rhapsody is cut short by the sight of Juno coming forward and confronting the two cronies. Both are stupefied.*]

Mrs. Boyle: (*with sweet irony—poking the fire, and turning her head to glare at* Joxer). Pull over to the fire, Joxer Daly, an' we'll have a cup o' tay in a minute! Are you sure, now, you wouldn't like an egg?

Joxer: I can't stop, Mrs. Boyle; I'm in a desperate hurry, a desperate hurry.

Mrs. Boyle: Pull over to the fire, Joxer Daly; people is always far more comfortable here than they are in their own place.

[Joxer *makes hastily for the door.* Boyle *stirs to follow him; thinks of something to relieve the situation—stops, and says suddenly*]: Joxer!

Joxer: (*at door ready to bolt*). Yis?

Boyle: You know the foreman o' that job that's goin' on down in Killesther,[15] don't you, Joxer?

Joxer: (*puzzled*). Foreman — Killesther?

11. From the romantic opera *Lurline* (1860) by Irish composer William Vincent Wallace (1812-1865).
12. Juno's rendering of "affidavit," a written statement confirmed by oath.
13. Roman goddess of women and childbirth, queen of the gods and of heaven. The peacock drove her chariot.
14. Deirdre of the Sorrows. In Irish myth, the beautiful Deirdre deserted King Conchubar to run off with Naoise, as prophesied, thus bringing ruin upon Ulster.
15. A small suburb of Dublin on the northside.

Boyle: (*with a meaning look*). He's a butty o' yours, isn't he?

Joxer: (*the truth dawning on him*). The foreman at Killesther — oh yis, yis. He's an oul' butty o' mine — oh, he's a darlin' man, a daarlin' man.

Boyle: Oh, then, it's a sure thing. It's a pity we didn't go down at breakfast first thing this mornin' — we might ha' been working now; but you didn't know it then.

Joxer: (with a shrug). It's betther late than never.

Boyle: It's nearly time we got a start, anyhow; I'm fed up knockin' round, doin' nothin'. He promised you — gave you the straight tip?

Joxer: Yis. "Come down on the blow o' dinner," says he, "an' I'll start you, an' any friend you like to brin' with you." "Ah," says I, "you're a darlin' man, a daaarlin' man."

Boyle: Well, it couldn't have come at a betther time — we're a long time waitin' for it.

Joxer: Indeed we were — but it's a long lane that has no turnin'.

Boyle: The blow up for dinner is at one — wait till I see what time it 'tis.

[He goes over to the mantelpiece, and gingerly lifts the clock.]

Mrs. Boyle: Min' now, how you go on fiddlin' with that clock — you know the least thing sets it asthray.

Boyle: The job couldn't come at a betther time; I'm feelin' in great fettle, Joxer. I'd hardly believe I ever had a pain in me legs, an' last week I was nearly crippled with them.

Joxer: That's betther an' betther; ah, God never shut wan door but He opened another!

Boyle: It's only eleven o'clock; We've lashin's o' time. I'll slip on me oul' moleskins afther breakfast, an' we can saunther down at our ayse. (*Putting his hand on the shovel*) I think, Joxer, we'd betther bring our shovels?

Joxer: Yis, Captain, yis; it's betther to go fully prepared an' ready for all eventualities. You bring your long-tailed shovel, an' I'll bring me navvy. We mighten' want them, an', then agen, we might : for want of a nail the shoe was lost, for want of a shoe the horse was lost, an' for want of a horse the man was lost — aw, that's a darlin' proverb, a daarlin'… [*As* Joxer *is finishing his sentence, Mrs. Boyle approaches the door and Joxer retreats hurriedly. She shuts the door with a bang.*]

Boyle: (*suggestively*). We won't be long pullin' ourselves together agen when I'm working for a few weeks. [Mrs. Boyle *takes no notice*.]

Boyle: The foreman on the job is an oul' butty o' Joxer's; I have an idea that I know him meself – (*Silence*) There's a button off the back o' me moleskin trousers — If you leave out a needle an' thread I'll sew it on meself — Thanks be to God, the pains in me legs is gone, anyhow!

Mrs. Boyle: (*with a burst*). Look here, Mr. Jacky Boyle, them yarns won't go down with Juno. I know you an' Joxer Daly of an oul' date, an' if you think you're able to come it over me with them fairy tales, you're in the wrong shop.

Boyle: U-u-u-ugh!

Mrs. Boyle: Butty o' Joxer's! Oh, you'll do a lot o' good as long as you continue to be a butty o' Joxer's!

Boyle: (*coughing subduedly to relieve the tenseness of the situation*). U-u-u-ugh!

Mrs. Boyle: Shovel! Ah, then, me boyo, you'd do far more work with a knife an' fork than ever you'll do with a shovel! If there was e'er a genuine job goin' you'd be dh'other way about — not able to lift your arms with the pains in your legs! Your poor wife slavin' to keep the bit in your mouth, an' you gallivantin' about all the day like a paycock!

Boyle: It ud betther for a man to be dead, betther for a man to be dead.

Mrs. Boyle: (*ignoring the interruption*). Everybody callin' you 'Captain', an' you only wanst on the

wather, in an oul' collier[16] from here to Liverpool, when anybody, to listen or look at you, ud take you for a second Christo For Columbus!

Boyle: Are you never goin' to give us a rest?

Mrs. Boyle: Oh, you're never tired o' lookin' for a rest.

Boyle: D'ye want to drive me out o' the house?

Mrs. Boyle: It ud be easier to dhrive you out o' the house than to dhrive you into a job. Here, sit down an' take your breakfast — it may be the last you'll get, for I don't know where the next is goin' to come from.

Boyle: If I get this job we'll be all right.

Mrs. Boyle: Did ye see Jerry Devine?

Boyle: (*testily*). No, I didn't see him.

Mrs. Boyle: No, but you seen Joxer. Well, he was here lookin' for you.

Boyle: Well, let him look!

Mrs. Boyle: Oh, indeed, he may well look, for it ud be hard for him to see you, an' you stuck in Ryan's snug.

Boyle: I wasn't in Ryan's snug — I don't go into Ryan's.

Mrs. Boyle: Oh, is there a mad dog in there? Well, if you weren't in Ryan's you were in Foley's.

Boyle: I'm telling you for the last three weeks I haven't tasted a dhrop of intoxicatin' liquor. I wasn't in ayther wan snug or dh'other — I could swear that on a prayer-book — I'm as innocent as the child unborn!

Mrs. Boyle: Well, if you'd been in for your breakfast you'd ha' seen him.

Boyle: (*suspiciously*). What does he want me for?

Mrs. Boyle: He'll be back any minute an' then you'll soon know.

Boyle: I'll dhrop out an' see if I can meet him.

Mrs. Boyle: You'll sit down an' take your breakfast, an' let me go to me work, for I'm an hour late already waitin' for you.

Boyle: You needn't ha' waited, for I'll take no breakfast — I've a little spirit left in me still!

Mrs. Boyle: Are you goin' to have your breakfast — yes or no?

Boyle: (*too proud to yield*). I'll have no breakfast — yous can keep your breakfast. (*Plaintively*) I'll knock out a bit somewhere, never fear.

Mrs. Boyle: Nobody's goin' to coax you — don't think that. *[She vigorously replaces the pan and the sausages in the press.*

Boyle: I've a little spirit left in me still.

[Jerry Devine *enters hastily*.]

Jerry: Oh, here you are at last! I've been searchin' for you everywhere. The foreman in Foley's told me you hadn't left the snug with Joxer ten minutes before I went in.

Mrs. Boyle: An' he swearin' on the holy prayer-book that he wasn't in no snug!

Boyle: What business is it o' yours whether I was in a snug or no? what do you want to be gallopin' about afther me for? Is a man not to be allowed to leave his house for a minute without havin' a pack o' spies, pimps an' informers cantherin' at his heels?

Jerry: Oh, you're takin' a wrong view of it, Mr. Boyle; I simply was anxious to do you a good turn. I have a message for you from Father Farrell : He says that if you go to the job that's on in Rathmines, an' ask for Foreman Managan, you'll get a start.

Boyle: That's all right, but I don't want the motions of me body to be watched the way an

16. A ship used to transport coal.

asthronomer ud watch a star. If you're folleyin' Mary aself, you've no pereeogative to be folleyin' me. (*Suddenly catching his thigh*) U-ugh, I'm afther gettin' a terrible twinge in me right leg!

Mrs. Boyle: Oh, it won't be very long now till it travels into your left wan. It's miraculous that whenever he scents a job in front of him, his legs begin to fail him! Then, me bucko, if you lose this chance, you may go an' furrage[17] for yourself!

Jerry: This job'll last for some time too, Captain, an' as soon as the foundations are in, it'll be cushy enough.

Boyle: Won't it be a climbin' job? How d'ye expect me to be able to go up a ladder with these legs? An', if I get up aself, how am I goin' to get down agen?

Mrs. Boyle: (*viciously*). Get wan o' the labourers to carry you down in a hod![18] You can't climb a laddher, but you can skip like a goat into a snug!

Jerry: I wouldn't let myself be let down that easy, Mr. Boyle; a little exercise, now, might do you all the good in the world.

Boyle: It's a docthor you should have been, Devine — maybe you know more about the pains in me legs than meself that has them?

Jerry: (*irritated*). Oh, I know nothin' about the pains in your legs; I've brought the message that Father Farrell gave me, an' that's all I can do.

Mrs. Boyle: Here, sit down an' take your breakfast, an' go an' get ready; an' don't be actin' as if you couldn't pull a wing out of a dead bee.

Boyle: I want no breakfast, I tell you; it ud choke me afther all that's been said. I've a little spirit left in me still.

Mrs. Boyle: Well, let's see your spirit, then, an' go in at wanst an' put on your moleskin trousers!

Boyle: (*moving towards the door on left*) It ud be betther for a man to be dead! U-ugh! There's another twinge in me other leg! Nobody but meself knows the sufferin' I'm goin' through with the pains in these legs o' mine! [*He goes into the room on left as* Mary *comes out with her hat in her hand*.]

Mrs. Boyle: I'll have to push off now, for I'm terrible late already, but I was determined to stay an' hunt that Joxer this time. [*She goes off*.]

Jerry: Are you going out, Mary?

Mary: It looks like it when I'm putting on my hat, doesn't it?

Jerry: The bitther word agen, Mary.

Mary: You won't allow me to be friendly with you; if I thry, you deliberately misundherstand it.

Jerry: I didn't always misundherstand it; you were often delighted to have the arms of Jerry around you.

Mary: If you go on talkin' like this, Jerry Devine, you'll make me hate you!

Jerry: Well, let it be either a weddin' or a wake! Listen, Mary, I'm standin' for the Secretaryship of our Union. There's only one opposin' me; I'm popular with all the men, an' a good speaker — all are sayin' that I'll get elected.

Mary: Well?

Jerry: The job's worth three hundred an' fifty pounds a year, Mary. You an' I could live nice an' cosily on that; it would lift you out o' this place an'…

Mary: I haven't time to listen to you now — I have to go. [*She is going out, when Jerry bars the way*.

Jerry: (*appealingly*). Mary, what's come over you with me for the last few weeks? You hardly speak to me, an' then only a word with a face o' bittherness on it. Have you forgotten, Mary, all the happy

17. Forage, look out for.

18. A tray or trough with a pole handle and that is borne on the shoulder for carrying bricks, mortar, or similar loads.

evenin's that were as sweet as the scented hawthorn that sheltered the sides o' the road as we sauntered through the country?

Mary: That's all over now. When you get your new job, Jerry, you won't be long findin' a girl far betther than I am for your sweetheart.

Jerry: Never, never, Mary! No matther what happens, you'll always be the same to me.

Mary: I must be off; please let me go, Jerry.

Jerry: I'll go a bit o' the way with you.

Mary: You needn't, thanks; I want to be by meself.

Jerry: (*catching her arm*). You're goin' to meet another fella; you've clicked with someone else, me lady!

Mary: That's no concern o' yours, Jerry Devine; let me go!

Jerry: I saw yous comin' our o' the Cornflower Dance Class, an' you hangin' on his arm — a thin, lanky strip of a Micky Dazzler, with a walkin'-stick an' gloves!

Voice of Johnny (*loudly*)**:** What are you doin' there — pullin' about everything!

*Voice of Boyle***:** (loudly and viciously). I'm puttin' on me moleskin trousers!

Mary: You're hurtin' me arm! Let me go, or I'll scream, an' then you'll have the oul' fella out on top of us!

Jerry: Don't be so hard on a fella, Mary, don't be so hard.

Boyle: (*appearing at the door*). What's the meanin' of all this hillabaloo?

Mary: Let me go, let me go!

Boyle: D'ye hear me — what's all this hillabaloo about?

Jerry: (*plaintively*) Will you not give us one kind word, one kind word, Mary?

Boyle: D'ye hear me talkin' to yous? What's all this hillabaloo for?

Jerry: Let me kiss your hand, your little, tiny, white hand!

Boyle: Your little, tiny, white hand — are you takin' leave o' your senses, man?

[Mary *breaks away and rushes out*.]

Boyle: This is nice goin's on in front of her father!

Jerry: Ah, dhry up, for God's sake! [*He follows* Mary.

Boyle: Chiselurs[19] don't care a damn now about their parents, they're bringin' their fathers' grey hairs down with sorra to the grave, an' laughin' at it, laughin' at it. Ah, I suppose it's just the same everywhere — the whole worl's in a state o' chassis![20] (*He sits by the fire*). Breakfast! Well, they can keep their breakfast for me. Not if they went down on their bended knees would I take it — I'll show them I've a little spirit left in me still! (*He goes over to the press, takes out a plate and looks at it*) Sassige! Well, let her keep her sassige. (*He returns to the fire, takes up the teapot and gives it a gentle shake*)

The tea's wet right enough. [*A pause; he rises, goes to the press, takes out the sausage, puts it on the pan, and puts both on the fire. He attends the sausage with a fork*.]

Boyle: (*singing*)

When the robins nest agen,
And the flowers are in bloom,
When the Springtime's sunny smile seems to banish all sorrow an' gloom;
Then me bonny blue-ey'd lad, if me heart be true till then—
He's promised he'll come back to me,
When the robins nest agen!

19. Children.

20. Chaos.

[He *lifts his head at the high note, and then drops his eyes to the pan*.]

Boyle: *(singing)* When the…

[*Steps are heard approaching; he whips the pan off the fire and puts it under the bed, then sits down at the fire. The door opens and a bearded man looking in says*]*:*

Bearded man: You don't happen to want a sewin' machine?

Boyle: (*furiously*). No, I don't want e'er a sewin' machine! [*He returns the pan to the fire, and commences to sing again.*]

Boyle: When the robins nest agen,
And the flowers they are in bloom,
He's… [*A thundering knock is heard at the street door*.]

Boyle: There's a terrible tatheraraa — that's a stranger — that's nobody belongin' to the house. [*Another loud knock*.]

Joxer: (*sticking his head in at the door*). Did ye hear them tatherarahs?

Boyle: Well, Joxer, I'm not deaf.

Johnny: (*appearing in his shirt and trousers at the door on left; his face is anxious and his voice is tremulous*). Who's that at the door; who's that at the door? Who gave that knock — d'ye yous hear me — are yous deaf or dhrunk or what?

Boyle: (*to* Johnny). How the hell do I know who 'tis? Joxer, stick your head out o' the window an' see.

Joxer: An' mebbe get a bullet in the kisser? Ah, none o' them thricks for Joxer! It's betther to be a coward than a corpse!

Boyle: (*looking cautiously out of the window*). It's a fella in a thrench coat.[21]

Johnny: Holy Mary, Mother o' God, I…

Boyle: He's goin' away — he must ha' got tired knockin'.

[Johnny *returns to the room on left*.]

Boyle: Sit down an' have a cup o' tay, Joxer.

Joxer: I'm afraid the missus ud pop in on us agen before we'd know where we are. Somethin's tellin' me to go at wanst.

Boyle: Don't be superstitious, man; we're Dublin men, an' not boyos that's only afther comin' up from the bog o' Allen[22] — though if she did come in, right enough, we'd be caught like rats in a thrap.

Joxer: An' you know the sort she is — she wouldn't listen to reason — an' wanse bitten twice shy.

Boyle: (*going over to the window at back*). If the worst came to the worst, you could dart out here, Joxer; it's only a dhrop of a few feet to the roof of the return room, an' the first minute she goes into dh'other room I'll give you the bend, an' you can slip in an' away.

Joxer: (*yielding to the temptation*). Ah, I won't stop very long anyhow. (*Picking up a book from the table*) Whose is the buk?

Boyle: Aw, one o' Mary's; she's always readin' lately — nothin' but thrash, too. There's one I was lookin' at dh'other day : three stories, *The Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, an' *The Wild Duck* [23]— buks only fit for chiselurs!

Joxer: Didja ever rade *Elizabeth, or Th' Exile o' Sibayria*?[24] — Ah, it's a darlin' story, a daarlin' story!

21. Trench coats were commonly worn by members of the IRA.
22. An extensive area of bog, now partially reclaimed, 25 miles west-southwest of Dublin.
23. Three tragedies by Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), mistakenly considered by Boyle to be children's books
24. Elizabeth, or the Exile of Siberia, a popular tale by Madame Sophil Cottin (1770-1807).

Boyle: You eat your sassige, an' never min' *Th' Exile o' Sibayria*. [*Both sit down*; Boyle *fills out tea, pours gravy on Joxer's plate, and keeps the sausage for himself*.

Joxer: What are you wearin' your moleskin trousers for?

Boyle: I have to go to a job, Joxer. Just afther you'd gone, Devine kem runnin' in to tell us that Father Farrell said if I went down to the job that's goin' on in Rathmines I'd get a start.

Joxer: Be the holy, that's good news!

Boyle: How is it good news? I wonder if you were in my condition, would you call it good news?

Joxer: I thought…

Boyle: You thought! You think too sudden sometimes, Joxer. D'ye know, I'm hardly able to crawl with the pains in me legs!

Joxer: Yis, yis; I forgot the pains in your legs. I know you can do nothin' while they're at you.

Boyle: You forgot; I don't think any of yous realize the state I'm in with the pain in my legs. What ud happen if I had to carry a bag o' cement?

Joxer: Ah, any man havin' the like of them pains id be down an' out, down an' out.

Boyle: I wouldn't mind if he had said it to meself; but, no, oh no, he rushes in an' shouts it out in front o' Juno, an' you know what Juno is, Joxer. We all know Devine knows a little more than the rest of us, but he doesn't act as if he did; he's a good boy, sober, able to talk an' all that, but still…

Joxer: Oh ay; able to argufy, but still…

Boyle: If he's runnin' afther Mary, aself, he's not goin' to be runnin' afther me. Captain Boyle's able to take care of himself. Afther all, I'm not gettin' brought up on Virol.[25] I never heard him usin' a curse; I don't believe he was ever dhrunk in his life — sure he's not like a Christian at all!

Joxer: You're afther takin' the word out o' me mouth — afther all, a Christian's natural, but he's unnatural.

Boyle: His oul' fella was just the same — a Wicklow[26] man.

Joxer: A Wicklow man! That explains the whole thing. I've met many a Wicklow man in me time, but I never met wan that was any good.

Boyle: 'Father Farrell,' says he, 'sent me down to tell you.' Father Farrell! — D'ye know, Joxer, I never like to be beholden to any o' the clergy.

Joxer: It's dangerous, right enough.

Boyle: If they do anything for you, they'd want you to be livin' in the Chapel. — I'm goin' to tell you somethin', Joxer, that I wouldn't tell to anybody else — the clergy always had too much power over the people in this unfortunate country.

Joxer: You could sing that if you had an air to it!

Boyle: (*becoming enthusiastic*). Didn't they prevent the people in '47 from seizin' the corn,[27] an' they starvin'; didn't they down Parnell;[28] didn't they say that hell wasn't hot enough nor eternity long enough to punish the Fenians?[29] We don't forget, we don't forget them things, Joxer. If they've taken everything else from us, Joxer, they've left us our memory.

Joxer: (*emotionally*). For mem'ry's the only friend that grief can call its own, that grief — can — call — its own!

Boyle: Father Farrell's beginnin' to take a great intherest in Captain Boyle; because of what Johnny did for his country, says he to me wan day. It's a curious way to reward Johnny be makin' his poor oul'

25. A malt-extract given to children as a health food.
26. A county and town in the mid-east region of Ireland.
27. The height of the Great Famine in 1847.
28. Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-1891). Irish Nationalist politician. He became president of the Home Rule Party in 1877, but his career was ruined when his affair with Katherine O'Shea was exposed in 1890.
29. The Irish Republican Brotherhood, founded in 1858 as a radical, militarist form of nationalism.

father work. But that's what the clergy want, Joxer — work, work, work for me an' you; betther fettle when they come hoppin' round for their dues! Job! Well, let him give his job to wan of his hymn-singin', prayer-spoutin', craw-thumpin' Confraternity[30] men!

[*The voice of a coal-block vendor is heard chanting in the street.*]

*Voice of Coal Vendor***:** Blocks — coal-blocks! Blocks — coal-blocks!

Joxer: God be with the young days when you were steppin' the deck of a manly ship, with the win' blowin' a hurricane through the masts, an' the only sound you'd hear was, "Port your helm!" an' the only answer, "Port it is, sir!"

Boyle: Them was days, Joxer, them was days. Nothin' was too hot or too heavy for me then. Sailin' from the Gulf o' Mexico to the Antanartic Ocean. I seen things, I seen things, Joxer, that no mortal man should speak about that knows his Catechism. Ofen, an' ofen, when I was fixed to the wheel with a marlin-spike, an' the win's blowin' fierce an' the waves lashin' an' lashin', till you'd think every minute was goin' to be your last, an' it blowed, an' blowed — blew is the right word, Joxer, but blowed is what the sailors use…

Joxer: Aw, it's a darlin' word, a daarlin' word.

Boyle: An', as it blowed an' blowed, I ofen looked up at the sky an' assed meself the question — what is the stars, what is the stars?

*Voice of Coal Vendor***:** Any blocks, coal-blocks; blocks, coal-blocks!

Joxer: Ah, that's the question, that's the question — what is the stars?

Boyle: An' then, I'd have another look, an' I'd ass meself — what is the moon?

Joxer: Ah, that's the question — what is the moon, what is the moon?

[*Rapid steps are heard coming towards the door. Boyle makes desperate efforts to hide everything; Joxer rushes to the window in a frantic effort to get out; Boyle begins to innocently lilt, 'Oh, me darlin' Jennie, I will be thrue to thee', when the door is opened, and the black face of the Coal Vendor appears.*]

The Coal Vendor: D'yez want any blocks?

Boyle: (*with a roar*). No, we don't want any blocks!

Joxer: (*coming back with a sigh of relief*). That's afther puttin' the heart across me — I could ha' sworn it was Juno. I'd betther be goin', Captain; you couldn't tell the minute Juno'd hop in on us.

Boyle: Let her hop in; we may as well have it out first as at last. I've made up me mind — I'm not goin' to do only what she damn well likes.

Joxer: Them sentiments does you credit, Captain; I don't like to say anythings as between man an' wife, but I say as a butty, as a butty, Captain, that you've stuck it too long, an' that it's about time you showed a little spunk.

How can a man die betther than facin' fearful odds,
For th' ashes of his fathers an' the temples of his gods?[31]

Boyle: She has her rights — there's no one denyin' it, but haven't I me rights too?

Joxer: Of course you have — the sacred rights o' man!

Boyle: Today, Joxer, there's goin' to be issued a proclamation be me, establishin' an independent Republic,[32] an' Juno'll have to take an oath of allegiance.

Joxer: Be firm, be firm, Captain; the first few minutes'll be the worst: if you gently touch a nettle it'll sting you for your pains; grasp it like a lad of mettle, an' as soft as silk remains!

30. Roman Catholic organization of lay people created for the purpose of promoting special works of Christian charity or piety, and approved by the Church hierarchy.
31. Lines from Thomas Macaulay (1800-1859) *Lays of Ancient Rome,* "Horatius at the Bridge" (1842).
32. Here Boyle alludes to the Easter Rebellion of 1916, in which Irish republicans declared an independent Irish republic and hoisted the tricolour flag on the roof of the Dublin Post Office.

Voice of Juno outside: Can't stop, Mrs. Madigan — I haven't a minute!

Joxer: (*flying out of the window*). Holy God, here she is!

Boyle: I knew that fella ud stop till she was in on top of us!

[He sits down by the fire.]

[Juno *enters hastily; she is flurried and excited*.]

Juno: Oh, you're in — you must have been only afther comin' in?

Boyle: No, I never went out.

Juno: It's curious, then, you never heard the knockin'. [She *puts her coat and hat on bed*.]

Boyle: Knockin'? Of course I heard the knockin'.

Juno: An' why didn't you open the door, then? I suppose you were so busy with Joxer that you hadn't time.

Boyle: I haven't seen Joxer since I seen him before. Joxer! What ud bring Joxer here?

Juno: D'ye mean to tell me that the pair of yous wasn't collogin'[33] together here when me back was turned?

Boyle: What ud we be collogin' about? I have somethin' else to think of besides collogin' with Joxer. I can swear on all the holy prayer-books…

Mrs. Boyle: That you weren't in no snug! Go on in at wanst now, an' take off that moleskin trousers o' yours, an' put on a collar an' tie to smarten yourself up a bit. There's a visitor comin' with Mary in a minute, an' he has great news for you.

Boyle: A job, I suppose; let us get wan first before we start lookin' for another.

Mrs. Boyle: That's the thing that's able to put the win' up you. Well, it's no job, but news that'll give you the chance o' your life.

Boyle: What's all the mysthery about?

Mrs. Boyle: G'win an' take off the moleskin trousers when you're told! [Boyle *goes into room on left*.

[Mrs. Boyle *tidies up the room, puts the shovel under the bed, and goes to the press*.

Mrs. Boyle: Oh, God bless us, looka the way everything's thrun about! Oh, Joxer was here, Joxer was here!

[Mary enters with Charlie Bentham; he is a young man of twenty-five, tall, good-looking, with a very high opinion of himself generally. He is dressed in a brown coat, brown knee-breeches, grey stockings, a brown sweater, with a deep blue tie; he carries gloves and a walking-stick.]

Mrs. Boyle: (*fussing round*). Come in, Mr. Bentham; sit down, Mr. Bentham, in this chair; it's more comfortabler than that, Mr. Bentham. Himself'll be here in a minute; he's just takin' off his trousers.

Mary: Mother!

Bentham: Please don't put yourself to any trouble, Mrs. Boyle — I'm quite all right here, thank you.

Mrs. Boyle: An' to think of you knowin' Mary, an' she knowin' the news you had for us, an' wouldn't let on; but it's all the more welcomer now, for we were on our last lap!

Voice of Johnny inside: What are you kickin' up all the racket for?

Boyle: (*roughly*). I'm takin' off me moleskin trousers!

Johnny: Can't you do it, then, without lettin' th' whole house know you're takin' off your trousers? What d'ye want puttin' them on an' takin' them off again?

Boyle: Will you let me alone, will you let me alone? Am I never goin' to be done thryin' to please th' whole o' yous?

Mrs. Boyle: (*to* Bentham).You must excuse th' state o' th' place, Mr. Bentham; th' minute I turn me

33. Conspiring.

back that man o' mine always makes a litther o' th' place, a litther o' th' place.

Bentham: Don't worry, Mrs. Boyle; it's all right, I assure…

Boyle: (*inside*). Where's me braces; where in th' name o' God did I leave me braces? — Ay, did you see where I put me braces?

Johnny: (*inside, calling out*). Ma, will you come in here an' take da away ou' o' this or he'll dhrive me mad.

Mrs. Boyle: (*going towards the door*) Dear, dear, dear, that man'll be lookin' for somethin' on th' day o' Judgement. Look at your braces, man, hangin' round your neck!

Boyle: (*inside*). Aw, Holy God!

Mrs. Boyle: (*calling*). Johnny, Johnny, come out here for a minute.

Johnny: Ah, leave Johnny alone, an' don't be annoyin' him!

Mrs. Boyle: Come on, Johnny, till I inthroduce you to Mr. Bentham. (*To* Bentham) My son, Mr. Bentham; he's afther goin' through the mill. He was only a chiselur of a Boy Scout in Easter Week, when he got hit in the hip; and his arm was blew off in the fight in O'Connell Street. (*Johnny comes in*.) Here he is, Mr. Bentham; Mr. Bentham, Johnny. None can deny he done his bit for Irelan', if that's goin' to do him any good.

Johnny: (*boastfully*). I'd do it agen, ma, I'd do it agen; for a principle's a principle.

Mrs. Boyle: Ah, you lost your best principle, me boy, when you lost your arm; them's the only sort o' principle that's any good to a workin' man.

Johnny: Ireland only half free'll[34] never be at peace while she has a son left to pull a trigger.

Mrs. Boyle: To be sure, to be sure — no bread's a lot betther than half a loaf. (*Calling loudly in to* Boyle) Will you hurry up there?

[Boyle *enters in his best trousers, which aren't too good, and looks very uncomfortable in his collar and tie.*]

Mrs. Boyle: This is my husband; Mr. Boyle, Mr. Bentham.

Bentham: Ah, very glad to know you, Mr. Boyle. How are you?

Boyle: Ah, I'm not too well at all; I suffer terrible with pains in me legs. Juno can tell you there what…

Mrs. Boyle: You won't have many pains in your legs when you hear what Mr. Bentham has to tell you.

Bentham: Juno! What an interesting name! It reminds one of Homer's glorious story of ancient gods and heroes.

Boyle: Yis, doesn't it? You see, Juno was born an' christened in June; I met her in June; we were married in June, an' Johnny was born in June, so wan day I says to her, 'You should ha' been called Juno,' an' the name stuck to her ever since.

Mrs. Boyle: Here, we can talk o' them things agen; let Mr. Bentham say what he has to say now.

Bentham: Well, Mr. Boyle, I suppose you'll remember a Mr. Ellison of Santry[35] — he's a relative of yours, I think.

Boyle: *(viciously).* Is it that prognosticator an' procrastinator! Of course I remember him.

Bentham: Well, he's dead, Mr. Boyle…

Boyle: Sorra[36] many'll go into mournin' for him.

Mrs. Boyle: Wait till you hear what Mr. Bentham has to say, an' then, maybe, you'll change your opinion.

Bentham: A week before he died he sent for me to write his will for him. He told me that there were

34. A reference to the Treaty of 1921, which resulted in the partition of Ireland.
35. A Dublin suburb on the northside.
36. Sorra many. Not many.

two only that he wished to leave his property to : his second cousin, Michael Finnegan of Santry, and John Boyle, his first cousin, of Dublin.

Boyle: (*excitedly*). Me, is it me, me?

Bentham: You, Mr. Boyle; I'll read a copy of the will that I have here with me, which has been duly filed in the Court of Probate. [*He takes a paper from his pocket and reads:*

6th February 1922

This is the last Will and Testament of William Ellison, of Santry, in the County of Dublin. I hereby order and wish my property to be sold and divided as follows: £20 to the St. Vincent de Paul Society. £60 for Masses for the repose of my soul (5s. for each Mass). The rest of my property to be divided between my first and second cousins. I hereby appoint Timothy Buckly, of Santry, and Hugh Brierly, of Coolock, to be my Executors. William Ellison. Hugh Brierly. Timothy Buckly. Charles Bentham, N.T.[37]

Boyle: (*eagerly*). An' how much'll be comin' out of it, Mr. Bentham?

Bentham: The Executors told me that half of the property would be anything between 1500 and 2000 pounds.

Mary: A fortune, father, a fortune!

Johnny: We'll be able to get out o' this place now, an' go somewhere we're not known.

Mrs. Boyle: You won't have to trouble about a job for awhile, Jack.

Boyle: (*fervently*). I'll never doubt the goodness o' God agen.

Bentham: I congratulate you, Mr. Boyle. [*They shake hands*.]

Boyle: An' now, Mr. Bentham, you'll have to have a wet.

Bentham: A wet?

Boyle: A wet — a jar — a boul!

Mrs. Boyle: Jack, you're speakin' to Mr. Bentham, an' not to Joxer.

Boyle: (*solemnly*). Juno — Mary — Johnny — we'll have to go into mournin' at wanst — I never expected that poor Bill ud die so sudden — Well, we all have to die some day — you, Juno, to-day — an' me, maybe, to-morrow — It's sad, but it can't be helped — Requiescat in pace[38] — or, usin' our oul' tongue like St. Patrick or St. Bridget, Guh sayeree jeea ayera![39]

Mary: Oh, father, that's not Rest in Peace; that's God save Ireland.

Boyle: U-u-ugh, it's all the same — isn't it a prayer? — Juno, I'm done with Joxer; he's nothin' but a prognosticator an' a…

Joxer: (*climbing angrily through the window and bounding into the room*). You're done with Joxer, are you? Maybe you thought I'd stop on the roof all the night for you! Joxer out on the roof with the win' blowin' through him was nothin' to you an' your friend with the collar an' tie!

Mrs. Boyle: What in the name o' God brought you out on the roof; what were you doin' there?

Joxer: (*ironically*). I was dhreamin' I was standin' on the bridge of a ship, an' she sailin' the Antartic Ocean, an' it blowed, an' blowed, an' I lookin' up at the sky an' sayin', what is the stars, what is the stars?

Mrs. Boyle: (*opening the door and standing at it*). Here, get ou' o' this, Joxer Daly; I was always thinkin' you had a slate off.

Joxer: (*moving to the door*). I have to laugh every time I look at the deep-sea sailor; an' a row on a river ud make him seasick!

Boyle: Get ou' o' this before I take the law into me own hands!

Joxer: (*going out*). Say aw rewaeawr, but not good-bye. Lookin' for work, an' prayin' to God he won't get it! *[He goes.*

37. National-school teacher.
38. Latin. Rest in peace.
39. Phonetic spelling for prayer, "God Save Ireland".

Mrs. Boyle: I'm tired tellin' you what Joxer was; maybe now you see yourself the kind he is.

Boyle: He'll never blow the froth off a pint o' mine agen, that's a sure thing. Johnny — Mary — you're to keep yourselves to yourselves for the future. Juno, I'm done with Joxer — I'm a new man from this out. [*Clasping* Juno's *hand, and singing emotionally*]:

— O, me darlin' Juno, I will be thrue to thee;
Me own, me darlin' Juno, you're all the world to me.

CURTAIN

149.

Juno and the Paycock: ACT II

Sean O'Casey

The same, but the furniture is more plentiful, and of a vulgar nature. A glaringly upholstered armchair and lounge; cheap pictures and photos everywhere. Every available spot is ornamented with huge vases filled with artificial flowers. Crossed festoons of colored paper chains stretch from end to end of ceiling. On the table is an old attaché case. It is about six in the evening, and two days after the First Act. Boyle, *in his shirt-sleeves, is voluptuously stretched on the sofa; he is smoking a clay pipe. He is half asleep. A lamp is lighting on the table. After a few moments' pause the voice of* Joxer *is heard singing softly outside at the door –"Me pipe I'll smoke as I dhrive me moke– are you there, Mor…ee…ar…i…teee!"*[1]

Boyle: (*leaping up, takes a pen in his hand and busies himself with papers*). Come along, Joxer, me son, come along.

Joxer: (*putting his head in*)**.** Are you be yourself?

Boyle: Come on, come on; that doesn't matther; I'm masther now, an' I'm goin' to remain masther.

[Joxer *comes in.*]

Joxer: How d'ye feel now, as a man of money?

Boyle: (*solemnly*)**.** It's a responsibility, Joxer, a great responsibility.

Joxer: I suppose 'tis now, though you wouldn't think it.

Boyle: Joxer, han' me over that attackey case on the table there. (Joxer *hands the case*.) Ever since the Will was passed I've run hundreds o' dockyments through me han's — I tell you, you have to keep your wits about you.

Joxer: Well, I won't disturb you; I'll dhrop in when…

Boyle: It's all right, Joxer, this is the last one to be signed to-day. Now, Joxer, you want to see me; I'm at your service — what can I do for you, me man?

Joxer: I've just dhropped in with the £3:5s.that Mrs. Madigan riz on the blankets an' table for you, an' she says you're to be in no hurry payin' it back.

Boyle: She won't be long without it; I expect the first cheque for a couple o' hundhred any day. There's the five bob[2] for yourself — go on, take it, man; it'll not be the last you'll get from the Captain. Now an' agen we have our differ, but we're there together all the time.

Joxer: Me for you, an' you for me, like the two Musketeers.

Boyle: Father Farrell stopped me to-day an' tole me how glad he was I fell in for the money.

Joxer: He'll be stoppin' you ofen enough now; I suppose it was 'Mr.' Boyle with him?

Boyle: He shuk me be the han'…

Joxer: I met with Napper Tandy, an' he shuk me be the han'![3]

Boyle: You're seldom asthray, Joxer, but you're wrong shipped this time. What you're sayin' of Father Farrell is very near to blasfeemey. I don't like any one to talk disrespectful of Father Farrell.

1. This song became popular through the patriotic singer Gerard Crofts in the internment camps set up after the Easter Rebellion of 1916. Moriarity is a member of the D.M.P. (Dublin Metropolitan Police).
2. Five shillings.
3. A line from the ballad "The Wearing of the Green." James Napper Tandy (1740-1803) was an Irish patriot.

Joxer: You're takin' me up wrong, Captain; I wouldn't let a word be said agen Father Farrell — the heart o' the rowl,[4] that's what he is; I always said he was a darlin' man, a daarlin' man.

Boyle: Comin' up the stairs who did I meet but that bummer, Nugent. "I seen you talkin' to Father Farrell," says he, with a grin on him. "He'll be folleyin' you," says he, "like a Guardian Angel from this out" — all the time the oul' grin on him, Joxer.

Joxer: I never seen him yet but he had that oul' grin on him!

Boyle: "Mr. Nugent," says I, "Father Farrell is a man o' the people, an', as far as I know the History o' me country, the priests was always in the van of the fight for Irelan's freedom."

Joxer*: (fervently)* Who was it led the van, Soggart Aroon? Since the fight first began, Soggart Aroon?[5]

Boyle: "Who are you tellin'?" says he. "Didn't they let down the Fenians, an' didn't they do in Parnell? An' now — " "You ought to be ashamed o' yourself," says I, interruptin', him, "not to know the History o' your country." An' I left him gawkin' where he was.

Joxer: Where ignorance 's bliss 'tis folly to be wise; I wondher did he ever read the Story o' Irelan'.[6]

Boyle: Be J.L. Sullivan? Don't you know he didn't.

Joxer: Ah, it's a darlin' buk, a daarlin' buk!

Boyle: You'd betther be goin', now, Joxer; his Majesty, Bentham, 'll be here any minute, now.

Joxer: Be the way things is lookin', it'll be a match between him an' Mary. She's thrun over Jerry altogether. Well, I hope it will, for he's a darlin' man.

Boyle: I'm glad you think so — I don't. (*Irritably)* What's darlin' about him?

Joxer: *(nonplussed***)** I only seen him twiced; if you want to know me, come an' live with me.

Boyle: He's too dignified for me — to hear him talk you'd think he knew as much as a Boney's *Oraculum.[*footnote]Napoleon's *Oraculum* was a popular book in the 19th and early 20th centuries. See British Museum Catalogue v., 168, column 624, the *Oraculum* (1822) is described: "The book of fate, formerly in the possession of Napoleon…and now first rendered into English, from a German translation of an ancient Egyptian manuscript…." Described in The National Union Catalogue (V, 405, 173): ""Napoleon's *Oraculum* and dream book (1884): containing the great oracle of human destiny. Also the true meaning of almost any kind of dreams…."[/footnote] He's given up his job as teacher, an' is goin' to become a solicitor in Dublin — he's been studyin' law. I suppose he thinks I'll set him up, but he's wrong shipped. An' th' other fella — Jerry's as bad. The two o' them ud give you a pain in your face, listenin' to them; Jerry believin' in nothin', an' Bentham believin' in everythin'. One that says all is God an' no man; an' th' other says all is man an' no God!

Joxer: Well, I'll be off now.

Boyle: Don't forget to dhrop down afther awhile; we'll have a quiet jar, an' a song or two.

Joxer: Never fear.

Boyle: An' tell Mrs. Madigan that I hope we'll have the pleasure of her organization at our little enthertainment.

Joxer: Righto; we'll come down together.[*He goes out.*

[Johnny *comes from room on left, and sits down moodily at the fire.* Boyle *looks at him for a few moments, and shakes his head. He fills his pipe.*]

*Voice of Juno at the door***:** Open the door, Jack; this thing has me nearly kilt with the weight.

[Boyle *opens the door*. Juno *enters carrying the box of a gramophone,followed by* Mary *carrying the*

4. A good fellow.

5. Saggart Aroon. Gaelic. "Dear priest." Joxer is probably referring to a variant of a patriotic poem by John Banim (1798-1842), "Soggarth Aroon".

6. *Story of Ireland* (1867). A popular history by A.M. Sullivan (1830-1874), one of the founders of the Home Rule Party. Boyle confuses the author with Irish-American boxer John L. Sullivan (1858-1918).

horn and some parcels. Juno *leaves the box on the table and flops into a chair.*]

Juno: Carryin' that from Henry Street was no joke.

Boyle: U-u-ugh, that's a grand-lookin' insthrument — how much was it?

Juno: Pound down, an' five to be paid at two shillin's a week.

Boyle: That's reasonable enough.

Juno: I'm afraid we're runnin' into too much debt; first the furniture, an' now this.

Boyle: The whole lot won't be much out of £2000.

Mary: I don't know what you wanted a gramophone for — I know Charlie hates them; he says they're destructive of real music.

Boyle: Desthructive of music — that fella ud give you a pain in your face. All a gramophone wants is to be properly played; its thrue wondher is only felt when everythin's quiet — what a gramophone wants is dead silence!

Mary: But, father, Jerry says the same; afther all, you can only appreciate music when your ear is properly trained.

Boyle: That's another fella ud give you a pain in your face. Properly thrained! I suppose you couldn't appreciate football unless your fut was properly thrained.

Mrs. Boyle: (*to Mary*). Go on in ower that an' dress, or Charlie'll be in on you, an' tea nor nothin'll be ready.

[Mary *goes into the room left.*]

Mrs. Boyle: (*arranging table for tea*). You didn't look at our new gramophone, Johnny?

Johnny: 'Tisn't gramophones I'm thinking of.

Mrs. Boyle: An' what is it you're thinkin' of, allanna?[7]

Johnny: Nothin', nothin', nothin'.

Mrs. Boyle: Sure, you must be thinkin' of somethin'; it's yourself that has yourself the way y'are; sleepin' wan night in me sisther's, an' the nex' in your father's brother's — you'll get no rest goin' on that way.

Johnny: I can rest nowhere, nowhere, nowhere.

Mrs. Boyle: Sure, you're not thryin' to rest anywhere.

Johnny: Let me alone, let me alone, let me alone, for God's sake.

[*A knock at street door*]

Mrs. Boyle: (*in a flutter*). Here he is; here's Mr. Bentham!

Boyle: Well, there's room for him; it's a pity there's not a brass band to play him in.

Mrs. Boyle: We'll han' the tea round, an' not be clusthered round the table, as if we never seen nothin'. [*Steps are heard approaching, and* Juno *opening the door, allows* Bentham *to enter*.]

Juno: Give your hat an' stick to Jack, there — sit down, Mr. Bentham — no, not there — in th' easy chair be the fire — there, that's betther. Mary'll be out to you in a minute.

Boyle: (*solemnly*). I seen be the paper this mornin' that Consols[8] was down half per cent. That's serious, min' you, an' shows the whole counthry's in a state o' chassis.

Mrs. Boyle: What's Consols, Jack?

Boyle: Consols? Oh, Consols is — oh, there's no use tellin' women what Consols is — th' wouldn't undherstand.

Bentham: It's just as you were saying, Mr. Boyle…

[Mary *enters, charmingly dressed.*]

Bentham: Oh, good evening, Mary; how pretty you're looking!

7. Gaelic. "My baby."

8. Government securities.

Mary: (*archly*). Am I?

Boyle: We were just talkin' when you kem in, Mary; I was tellin' Mr. Bentham that the whole counthry's in a state o' chassis.

Mary: *(to* Bentham). Would you prefer the green or the blue ribbon round me hair, Charlie?

Mrs. Boyle: Mary, your father's speakin'.

Boyle: (*rapidly*). I was jus' tellin' Mr. Bentham that the whole counthry's in a state o' chassis.

Mary: I'm sure you're frettin', da, whether it is or no.

Mrs. Boyle: With all our churches an' religions, the worl's not a bit the betther.

Boyle: (*with a commanding gesture*). Tay!

[Mary *and* Mrs. Boyle *dispense the tea*.]

Mrs. Boyle: An' Irelan's takin' a leaf out o' the worl's buk; when we got the makin' of our own laws I thought we'd never stop to look behind us, but instead of that we never stopped to look before us! If the people ud folley up their religion betther there'd be a betther chance for us — what do you think, Mr. Bentham?

Bentham: I'm afraid I can't venture to express an opinion on that point, Mrs. Boyle; dogma has no attraction for me.

Mrs. Boyle: I forgot you didn't hold with us: what's this you said you were?

Bentham: A Theosophist,[9] Mrs. Boyle.

Mrs. Boyle: An' what in the name o' God's a Theosophist?

Boyle: A Theosophist, Juno, 's a — tell her, Mr. Bentham, tell her.

Bentham: It's hard to explain in a few words : Theosophy's founded on The Vedas, the religious books of the East. Its central theme is the existence of an all-pervading Spirit — the Life-Breath. Nothing really exists but this one Universal Life-Breath. And whatever even seems to exist separately from this Life-Breath, doesn't really exist at all. It is all vital force in man, in all animals, and in all vegetation. This Life-Breath is called the Prawna.

Mrs. Boyle: The Prawna! What a comical name!

Boyle: Prawna; yis, the Prawna. (*Blowing gently through his lips*) That's the Prawna!

Mrs. Boyle: Whist, whist, Jack.

Bentham: The happiness of man depends upon his sympathy with this Spirit. Men who have reached a high state of excellence are called Yogi. Some men become Yogi in a short time, it may take others millions of years.

Boyle: Yogi! I seen hundhreds of them in the streets o' San Francisco.

Bentham: It is said by these Yogi that if we practise certain mental exercises we would have powers denied to others — for instance, the faculty of seeing things that happen miles and miles away.

Mrs. Boyle: I wouldn't care to meddle with that sort o' belief; it's a very curious religion, altogether.

Boyle: What's curious about it? Isn't all religions curious? — if they weren't, you wouldn't get any one to believe them. But religions is passin' away — they've had their day like everything else. Take the real Dublin people, f'rinstance: they know more about Charlie Chaplin[10] an' Tommy Mix[11] than they do about SS. Peter an' Paul!

Mrs. Boyle: You don't believe in ghosts, Mr. Bentham?

Mary: Don't you know he doesn't, mother?

Bentham: I don't know that, Mary. Scientists are beginning to think that what we call ghosts are sometimes seen by person of a certain nature. They say that sensational actions, such as the killing of a

9. One who aims at the knowledge of God by means of intuition and contemplation. The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 by Mme Helena Blavatsky.
10. Charles Chaplin (1889-1977). London-born Hollywood comic actor.
11. Thomas Edwin "Tom" Mix (1880-1940).The first major star of Hollywood westerns.

person, demand great energy, and that energy lingers in the place where the action occurred. People may live in the place and see nothing, when someone may come along whose personality has some peculiar connection with the energy of the place, and, in a flash, the person sees the whole affair.

Johnny: (*rising swiftly, pale and affected*). What sort o' talk is this to be goin' on with? Is there nothin' betther to be talkin' about but the killin' o' people? My God, isn't it bad enough for these things to happen without talkin' about them! [*He hurriedly goes into the room on left.*

Bentham: Oh, I'm very sorry, Mrs. Boyle; I never thought.. .

Mrs. Boyle: (*apologetically*)**.** Never mind, Mr. Bentham, he's very touchy.

[*A frightened scream is heard from Johnny inside.*]

Mrs. Boyle: Mother of God, what's that? [*He rushes out again, his face pale, his lips twitching, his limbs trembling.*]

Johnny: Shut the door, shut the door, quick, for God's sake! Great God, have mercy on me! Blessed Mother o' God shelter me, shelter your son!

Mrs. Boyle: (*catching him in her arms*). What's wrong with you? What ails you? Sit down, sit down, here, on the bed — there now — there now.

Mary: Johnny, Johnny, what ails you?

Johnny: I seen him, I seen him — kneelin' in front o' the statue — merciful Jesus, have pity on me!

Mrs. Boyle: Get him a glass o' whisky — quick, man, an' don't stand gawkin'.

[Boyle *gets the whisky.*]

Johnny: Sit here, sit here, mother — between me an' the door.

Mrs. Boyle: I'll sit beside you as long as you like, only tell me what was it came across you at all?

Johnny: I seen him — I seen Robbie Tancred kneelin' down before the statue — an' the red light shinin' on him — an' when I went in — he turned an' looked at me — an' I seen the woun's bleedin' in his breast — Oh, why did he look at me like that? — it wasn't my fault that he was done in — Mother o' God, keep him away from me!

Mrs. Boyle: There, there, child, you've imagined it all. There was nothin' there at all — it was the red light you seen, an' the talk we had put all the rest into your head. Here, dhrink, more o' this — it'll do you good — An', now, stretch yourself down on the bed for a little. (*To* Boyle) Go in, Jack, an' show him it was only in his own head it was.

Boyle: (*making no move*). E-e-e-eh; it's all nonsense; it was only a shadda he saw.

Mary: Mother o' God, he made me heart lep!

Bentham: It was simply due to an overwrought imagination — we all get that way at times.

Mrs. Boyle: There, dear, lie down in the bed, an' I'll put the quilt across you — e-e-e-eh, that's it — you'll be as right as the mail in a few minutes.

Johnny: Mother, go into the room an' see if the light's lightin' before the statue.

Mrs. Boyle: (*to* Boyle). Jack, run in an' see if the light's lightin' before the statue.

Boyle: (*to* Mary). Mary, slip in an' see if the light's lightin' before the statue. [Mary *hesitates to go in.*]

Bentham: It's all right; Mary, I'll go. [*He goes into the room, remains for a few moments, and returns.*

Bentham: Everything's just as it was — the light burning bravely before the statue. **Boyle:** Of course; I knew it was all nonsense.

[*A knock at the door.*]

Boyle: (*going to open the door*). E-e-e-e-eh. [*He opens it, and* Joxer, *followed by* Mrs. Madigan, *enters*. Mrs. Madigan *is a strong, dapper little woman of about forty-five; her face is almost always a widespread smile of complacency. She is a woman who, in manner at least, can mourn with them that mourn, and rejoice with them that do rejoice. When she is feeling comfortable, she is inclined to be reminiscent; when others say anything, or following a statement made by herself, she has a habit*

of putting her head a little to one side, and nodding it rapidly several times in succession, like a bird pecking at a hard berry. Indeed, she has a good deal of the bird in her, but the bird instinct is by no means a melodious one. She is ignorant, vulgar and forward, but her heart is generous withal. For instance, she would help the neighbor's sick child; she would probably kill the child, but her intention would be to cure it; she would be more at home helping a drayman to lift a fallen horse. She is dressed in a rather soiled grey dress and a vivid purple blouse; in her hair is a huge comb, ornamented with huge coloured beads. She enters with a gliding step, beaming smile and nodding head. Boyle *receives them effusively.*]

Boyle: Come on in, Mrs. Madigan; come on in; I was afraid you weren't comin' – (*Slyly*) There's some people able to dhress, ay, Joxer?

Joxer: Fair as the blossoms that bloom in the May, an' sweet as the scent of the new-mown hay. — Ah, well she may wear them.

Mrs. Madigan: (*Looking at Mary*)**.** I know some as are as sweet as the blossoms that bloom in the May — oh, no names, no pack dhrill!

Boyle: An' now I'll inthroduce the pair o' yous to Mary's intended: Mr. Bentham, this is Mrs. Madigan, an oul' back-parlour neighbour, that, if she could help it at all, ud never see a body shuk!

Bentham: (*rising, and tentatively shaking the hand of* Mrs. Madigan). I'm sure, it's a great pleasure to know you, Mrs. Madigan.

Mrs. Madigan: An' I'm goin' to tell you, Mr. Bentham, you're goin' to get as nice a bit o' skirt in Mary, there, as ever you seen in your puff. Not like some of the dhressed-up dolls that's knockin' about lookin' for men when it's a skelpin' they want. I remember, as well as I remember yestherday, the day she was born — of a Tuesday, the 25th o' June, in the year 1901, at thirty-three minutes past wan in the day be Foley's clock, the pub at the corner o' the street. A cowld day it was too, for the season o' the year, an' I remember sayin' to Joxer, there, who I met comin' up th' stairs, that the new arrival in Boyle's ud grow up a hardy chiselur if it lived, an' that she'd be somethin' one o' these days that nobody suspected, an' so signs on it, here she is to-day, goin' to be married to a young man lookin' as if he'd be fit to commensurate in any position in life it ud please God to call him!

Boyle: (*effusively*). Sit down, Mrs. Madigan, sit down, me oul' sport. This is Joxer Daly, Past Chief Ranger of the Dear Little Shamrock Branch of the Irish National Foresters, an oul' front-top neighbour, that never despaired, even in the darkest days of Ireland's sorra.

Joxer: Nil desperandum,[12] Captain, nil desperandum.

Boyle: Sit down, Joxer, sit down. The two of us was ofen in a tight corner.

Mrs. Boyle: Ay, in Foley's snug!

Joxer: An' we kem out of it flyin', we kem out of it flyin', Captain.

Boyle: An' now for a dhrink — I know yous won't refuse an oul' friend.

Mrs. Madigan: Is Johnny not well, Mrs…

Mrs. Boyle: (*warningly*). S-s-s-sh.

Mrs. Madigan: Oh, the poor darlin'.

Boyle: Well, Mrs. Madigan, is it tea or what?

Mrs. Madigan: Well, speakin' for meself, I jus' had me tea a minute ago, an' I'm afraid to dhrink any more — I'm never the same when I dhrink too much tay. Thanks, all the same, Mr. Boyle.

Boyle: Well, what about a bottle o' stout or a dhrop o' whisky?

Mrs. Madigan: A bottle o' stout ud be a little too heavy for me stummock afther me tay — A-a-a-ah, I'll thry the ball o' malt.

[Boyle *prepares the whisky.*]

Mrs. Madigan: There's nothin' like a ball o' malt occasional like — too much of it isn't good. (*To*

12. Never despair (Latin).

Boyle, *who is adding water*) Ah, God, Johnny, don't put too much wather on it! (*She drinks*). I suppose yous'll be lavin' this place.

Boyle: I'm looking for a place near the sea; I'd like the place that you might say was me cradle, to be me grave as well. The sea is always callin' me.

Joxer: She is callin', callin', callin', in the win' an' on the sea.

Boyle: Another dhrop o' whisky, Mrs. Madigan?

Mrs. Madigan: Well, now, it ud be hard to refuse seein' the suspicious times that's in it.

Boyle: (*with a commanding gesture*). Song! — Juno — Mary — Home to Our Mountains![13]

Mrs. Madigan: (e*nthusiastically*). Hear, hear!

Joxer: Oh, tha's a darlin' song, a daarlin' song!

Mary: (*bashfully*). Ah no, da; I'm not in a singin' humour.

Mrs. Madigan: Gawn with you, child, an' you only goin' to be married; I remember as well as I remember yestherday, — it was on a lovely August evenin', exactly, accordin' to date, fifteen years ago, come the Tuesday folleyin' the nex' that's comin' on, when me own man — *the Lord be good to him* — an' me was sittin' shy together in a doty little nook on a counthry road, adjacent to The Stiles. 'That'll scratch your lovely, little white neck,' says he, ketchin' hould of a danglin' bramble branch, holdin' clusters of the lovliest flowers you ever seen, an' breakin' it off, so that his arm fell, accidental like, roun' me waist, an' as I felt it tightenin', an' tightenin', an' tightenin', I thought me buzzom was every minute goin' to burst out into a roystherin' song about 'The little green leaves that were shakin' on the threes, The gallivantin' buttherflies, an' buzzin' o' the bees! '

Boyle: Ordher for the song!

Juno: Come on, Mary — we'll do our best. [Juno **and** Mary *stand up, and choosing a suitable position, sing simply 'Home to Our Mountains'*. [They bow to the company and return to their places.

Boyle: (*emotionally, at the end of song*). Lull — me — to — rest!

Joxer: (*clapping his hands*). Bravo, bravo! Darlin' girulls, darlin' girulls!

Mrs. Madigan: Juno, I never seen you in betther form.

Bentham: Very nicely rendered indeed.

Mrs. Madigan: A noble call, a noble call!

Mrs. Boyle: What about yourself, Mrs. Madigan?

[*After some coaxing,* Mrs. Madigan *rises, and in a quavering voice, sings the following verse*]:

Mrs. Madigan:

If I were a blackbird I'd whistle and sing;
I'd follow the ship that my thrue love was in;
An' on the top riggin', I'd there build me nest,
An' at night I would sleep on me Willie's white breast![14] [*Becoming husky, amid applause, she sits down*.]

Mrs. Madigan: Ah, me voice is too husky now, Juno; though I remember the time when Maisie Madigan could sing like a nightingale at matin' time. I remember as well as I remember yestherday, at a party given to celebrate the comin' of the first chiselur to Annie an' Benny Jimeson — who was the barber, yous may remember, in Henrietta Street, that, afther Easter Week, hung out a green, white an' orange pole an' then, when the Tans[15] started their Jazz dancin', whipped it in agen, an' stuck out a red, white an' blue wan instead, givin' as an excuse that a barber's pole was strictly non-political — singin'

13. Aria from Verdi's *Il Trovatore* (1853).
14. A traditional Irish song about a woman jilted by a sailor.
15. Black and Tans. A force of temporary constables recruited in Britain in 1919 to fight the Irish Republican Army. Their nickname referred to the colour of their khaki uniforms. They became infamous for their attacks on civilians.

'An' You'll Remember Me' with the top notes quiverin' in a dead hush of pethrified attention, folleyed be a clappin' o' han's that shuk the tumblers on the table, an' capped by Jimeson, the barber, sayin' that it was the best rendherin' of 'You'll Remember Me' he ever heard in his natural!

Boyle: (*peremptorily*). Ordher for Joxer's song!

Joxer: Ah no, I couldn't; don't ass me, Captain.

Boyle: Joxer's song, Joxer's song — give us wan of your shut-eyed wans.

[Joxer *settles himself in his chair; takes a drink; clears his throat; solemnly closes his eyes, and begins to sing in a very querulous voice*]:

Joxer:

She is far from the lan' where her young hero sleeps,
An' lovers around her are sighing,
An' lovers around her are sighin' — sighin' — sighin'…[16] [*A pause*].

Boyle: (*imitating* Joxer). And lovers around her are sighing! What's the use of thryin' to sing the song if you don't know it?

Mary: Thry another one, Mr. Daly — maybe you'd be more fortunate.

Mrs. Madigan: Gawn, Joxer; thry another wan.

Joxer: (*starting again*).

I have heard the mavis singin' his love song to the morn[17];
I have seen the dew-dhrop clingin' to the rose jus' newly born;
but — but – (*frantically*) To the rose jus' newly born — newly born — born.

Johnny: Mother, put on the gramophone, for God's sake, an' stop Joxer's bawlin'.

Boyle: (*commandingly*). Gramophone! — I hate to see fellas thryin' to do what they're not able to do.

[Boyle *arranges the gramophone, and is about to start it, when voices are heard of persons descending the stairs*.]

Mrs. Boyle: (*warningly*). Whisht, Jack, don't put it on, don't put it on yet; this must be poor Mrs. Tancred comin' down to go to the hospital — I forgot all about them bringin' the body to the church to-night. Open the door, Mary, an' give them a bit o' light.

[Mary opens the door, and Mrs. Tancred—very old woman, obviously shaken by the death of her son — appears, accompanied by several neighbours. The first few phrases are spoken before they appear.]

First Neighbour: It's a sad journey we're goin' on, but God's good, an' the Republicans won't be always down.

Mrs. Tancred: Ah, what good is that to me now? Whether they're up or down — it won't bring me darlin' boy from the grave.

Mrs. Boyle: Come in an' have a hot cup o' tay, Mrs. Tancred, before you go.

Mrs. Tancred: Ah, I can take nothin' now, Mrs. Boyle — I won't be long afther him.

Firsteighbour: Still an' all, he died a noble death, an' we'll bury him like a king.

Mrs. Tancred: An' I'll go on livin' like a pauper. Ah, what's the pains I suffered bringin' him into the world to carry him to his cradle, to the pains I'm sufferin' now, carryin' him out o' the world to bring him to his grave!

Mary: It would be better for you not to go at all, Mrs. Tancred, but to stay at home beside the fire with some o' the neighbours.

Mrs. Tancred: I seen the first of him, an' I'll see the last of him.

16. Song composed by Irish poet Thomas Moore (1779-1852), best-known for "The Minstrel Boy."
17. A popular love song (ca. 1850), by Charles Jefferys (1805-1867).

Mrs. Boyle: You'd want a shawl, Mrs. Tancred; it's a cowld night, an' the win's blowin' sharp.

Mrs. Madigan: (*rushing out*). I've a shawl above.

Mrs. Tancred: Me home is gone now; he was me only child, an' to think that he was lyin' for a whole night stretched out on the side of a lonely counthry lane, with his head, his darlin' head, that I ofen kissed an' fondled, half hidden in the wather of a runnin' brook. An' I'm told he was the leadher of the ambush where me nex' door neighbour, Mrs. Mannin', lost her Free State soldier son. An' now here's the two of us oul' women, standin' one on each side of a scales o' sorra, balanced be the bodies of our two dead darlin' sons. (*Mrs. Madigan returns, and wraps a shawl around her.*) God bless you, Mrs. Madigan — (*She moves slowly towards the door*) Mother o' God, Mother o' God, have pity on the pair of us! — O Blessed Virgin, where were you when me darlin' son was riddled with bullets, when me darlin' son was riddled with bullets! — Sacred Heart of the Crucified Jesus, take away our hearts o' stone — an' give us hearts o' flesh! — Take away this murdherin' hate — an' give us Thine own eternal love! [*They pass out of the room*].

Mrs. Boyle: (*explanatorily to Bentham*). That was Mrs. Tancred of the two-pair back; her son was found, e'er yestherday, lyin' out beyant Finglas riddled with bullets. A Die-hard he was, be all accounts. He was a nice quiet boy, but lattherly he went to hell, with his Republic first, an' his Republic last an' Republic over all. He often took tea with us here, in the oul' days, an' Johnny, there, an' him used to be always together.

Johnny: Am I always to be havin' to tell you that he was no friend o' mine? I never cared for him, an' he could never stick me. It's not because he was Commandant of the Battalion that I was Quarther-Masther of, that we were friends.

Mrs. Boyle: He's gone now — the Lord be good to him! God help his poor oul' creature of a mother, for no matther whose friend or enemy he was, he was her poor son.

Bentham: The whole thing is terrible, Mrs. Boyle; but the only way to deal with a mad dog is to destroy him.

Mrs. Boyle: An' to think of me forgettin' about him bein' brought to the church to-night, an' we singin' an' all, but it was well we hadn't the gramophone goin', anyhow.

Boyle: Even if we had aself. We've nothin' to do with these things, one way or t'other. That's the Government's business, an' let them do what we're payin' them for doin'.

Mrs. Boyle: I'd like to know how a body's not to mind these things; look at the way they're afther leavin' the people in this very house. Hasn't the whole house, nearly, been massacreed? There's young Dougherty's husband with his leg off; Mrs. Travers that had her son blew up be a mine in Inchegeela, in Co. Cork; Mrs. Mannin' that lost wan of her sons in an ambush a few weeks ago, an' now, poor Mrs. Tancred's only child gone west with his body made a collandher of. Sure, if it's not our business, I don't know whose business it is.

Boyle: Here, there, that's enough about them things; they don't affect us, an' we needn't give a damn. If they want a wake, well, let them have a wake. When I was a sailor, I was always resigned to meet with a wathery grave; an' if they want to be soldiers, well, there's no use o' them squealin' when they meet a soldier's fate.

Joxer: Let me like a soldier fall — me breast expandin' to th' ball!

Mrs. Boyle: In wan way, she deserves all she got; for lately, she let th' Die-hards make an open house of th' place; an' for th' last couple of months, either when th' sun was risin' or when th' sun was settin', you had C.I.D.[18] men burstin' into your room, assin' you where were you born, where were you christened, where were you married, an' where would you be buried!

18. Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in the Irish Free State was an armed, plain-clothed counter-insurgency police unit that operated during the Irish Civil War.

Johnny: For God's sake, let us have no more o' this talk.

Mrs. Madigan: What about Mr. Boyle's song before we start th' gramophone?

Mary: [*getting her hat, and putting it on*]. Mother, Charlie and I are goin' out for a little sthroll.

Mrs. Boyle: All right, darlin'.

Bentham: [*Going out with Mary*]. We won't be long away, Mrs. Boyle.

Mrs. Madigan: Gwan, Captain, gwan.

Boyle: E-e-e-e-eh, I'd want to have a few more jars in me, before I'd be in fettle for singin'.

Joxer: Give us that poem you writ t'other day. (*To the rest*) Aw, it's a darlin' poem, a daarlin' poem.

Mrs. Boyle: God bless us, is he startin' to write poetry!

Boyle: (*rising to his feet*). E-e-e-e-eh. [*He recites in an emotional, consequential manner the following verses]:*

Shawn an' I were friends, sir, to me he was all in all.
His work was very heavy and his wages were very small.
None betther on th' beach as Docker, I'll go bail,
'Tis now I'm feelin' lonely, for to-day he lies in jail.
He was not what some call pious — seldom at church or prayer;
For the greatest scoundrels I know, sir, goes every Sunday there.
Fond of his pint — well, rather, but hated the Boss by creed
But never refused a copper to comfort a pal in need. E-e-e-e-eh. [*He sits down.*]

Mrs. Madigan: Grand, grand; you should folly that up, you should folly that up.

Joxer: It's a daarlin' poem!

Boyle: (*delightedly*). E-e-e-e-eh.

Johnny: Are yous goin' to put on th' gramophone to-night, or are yous not?

Mrs. Boyle: Gwan, Jack, put on a record.

Mrs. Madigan: Gwan, Captain, gwan.

Boyle: Well, yous'll want to keep a dead silence.

[*He sets a record, starts the machine, and it begins to play "If you're Irish, come into the Parlour". As the tune is in full blare the door is suddenly opened by a brisk, little bald-headed man, dressed circumspectly in a black suit; He glares fiercely at all in the room; he is 'Needle Nugent', a tailor. He carries his hat in his hand.*]

Nugent: (*loudly, above the noise of the gramophone*).
Are yous goin' to have that thing bawlin' an' the funeral of Mrs. Tancred's son passin' the house? Have none of yous any respect for the Irish people's National regard for the dead? [Boyle *stops the gramophone.*

Mrs. Boyle: Maybe, Needle Nugent, it's nearly time we had a little less respect for the dead, an' a little more regard for the livin'.

Mrs. Madigan: We don't want you, Mr. Nugent, to teach us what we learned at our mother's knee. You don't look yourself as if you were dyin' of grief; if y'ass Maisie Madigan anything, I'd call you a real thrue Die-hard an' live-soft Republican, attendin' Republican funerals in the day, an' stoppin' up half the night makin' suits for the Civic Guards![19]

[*Persons are heard running down to the street, some saying, "Here it is, here it is."* Nugent *withdraws, and the rest, except Johnny, go to the window looking into the street, and look out. Sounds of a crowd coming nearer are heard; portion are singing*]:

19. Irish police force.

Crowd:
To Jesus' Heart all burning
With fervent love for men,
My heart with fondest yearning
Shall raise its joyful strain.
While ages course along,
Blest be with loudest song
The Sacred Heart of Jesus
By every heart and tongue.

Mrs. Boyle: Here's the hearse, here's the hearse!

Boyle: There's t'oul' mother walkin' behin' the coffin.

Mrs. Madigan: You can hardly see the coffin with the wreaths.

Joxer: Oh, it's a darlin' funeral, a daarlin' funeral!

Mrs. Madigan: W'd have a betther view from the street.

Boyle: Yes — this place ud give you a crick in your neck. [*They leave the room, and go down.* Johnny *sit smoothly by the fire. A young man enters; he looks at* Johnny *for a moment.*]

The Young Man: Quarther-Masther Boyle.

Johnny: (*with a start*). The Mobilizer!

The Young Man: You're not at the funeral?

Johnny: I'm not well.

The Young Man: I'm glad I've found you; you were stoppin' at your aunt's; I called there but you'd gone. I've to give you an ordher to attend a Battalion Staff meetin' the night afther to-morrow.

Johnny: Where?

The Young Man: I don't know; you're to meet me at the Pillar at eight o'clock; then we're to go to a place I'll be told of to-night; there we'll meet a mothor that'll bring us to the meeting. They think you might be able to know somethin' about them that gave the bend where Commandment Tancred was shelterin'.

Johnny: I'm not goin', then. I know nothing about Tancred.

The Young Man: (*at the door*). You'd betther come for your own sake — remember your oath.

Johnny: *(passionately.*

I won't go! Haven't I done enough for Ireland! I've lost me arm, an' me hip's desthroyed so that I'll never be able to walk right agen! Good God, haven't I done enough for Ireland?

The Young Man: Boyle, no man can do enough for Ireland! [*He goes.*

[*Faintly in the distance the crowd is heard saying*]:

Crowd: Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with Thee; Blessed art Thou amongst women, and blessed, etc.

CURTAIN

150.

Juno and the Paycock: ACT III

Sean O'Casey

The same as Act II. It is about half-past six on a November evening; a bright fire burns in the grate; Mary, dressed to go out, is sitting on a chair by the fire, leaning forward, her hands under her chin, her elbows on her knees. A look of dejection, mingled with uncertain anxiety, is on her face. A lamp, turned low, is lighting on the table. The votive light under the picture of the Virgin gleams more redly than ever. Mrs. Boyle is putting on her hat and coat. It is two months later.

Mrs. Boyle: An' has Bentham never even written to you since — not one line for the past month?

Mary: (*tonelessly*). Not even a line, mother.

Mrs. Boyle: That's very curious — What came between the two of yous at all? To leave you so sudden, an' yous so great together — To go away t' England, an' not to even leave you his address — The way he was always bringin' you to dances, I thought he was mad afther you. Are you sure you said nothin' to him?

Mary: No, mother — at least nothing that could possibly explain his givin' me up.

Mrs. Boyle: You know you're a bit hasty at times, Mary, an' say things you shouldn't say.

Mary: I never said to him what I shouldn't say, I'm sure of that.

Mrs. Boyle: How are you sure of it?

Mary: Because I love him with all my heart and soul, mother. Why, I don't know; I often thought to myself that he wasn't the man poor Jerry was, but I couldn't help loving him all the same.

Mrs. Boyle: But you shouldn't be frettin' the way you are; when a woman loses a man, she never knows what she's afther losin', to be sure, but, then, she never knows what she's afther gainin', either. You're not the one girl of a month ago — you look like one pinin' away. It's long ago I had a right to bring you to the doctor, instead of waitin' till to-night.

Mary: There's no necessity, really, mother, to go to the doctor; nothing serious is wrong with me — I'm run down and disappointed, that's all.

Mrs. Boyle: I'll not wait another minute; I don't like the look of you at all — I'm afraid we made a mistake in throwin' over poor Jerry — He'd have been betther for you than that Bentham.

Mary: Mother, the best man for a woman is the one for whom she has the most love, and Charlie had it all.

Mrs. Boyle: Well, there's one thing to be said for him — he couldn't have been thinkin' of the money, or he wouldn't ha' left you — it must ha' been somethin' else.

Mary: (*wearily*). I don't know — I don't know, mother, — only I think…

Mrs. Boyle: What d'ye think?

Mary: I imagine — he thought — we weren't — good enough for him.

Mrs. Boyle: An' what was he himself, only a school teacher? Though I don't blame him for fightin' shy of people like that Joxer fella an' that oul' Madigan wan — nice sort o' people for your father to inthroduce to a man like Mr. Bentham. You might have told me all about this before now, Mary; I don't know why you like to hide everything from your mother; you knew Bentham, an' I'd ha' known nothin' about it if it hadn't bin for the Will; an' it was only to-day, afther long coaxin', that you let out that he's

left you.

Mary: It would have been useless to tell you — you wouldn't understand.

Mrs. Boyle: (*hurt*). Maybe not — Maybe I wouldn't understand — Well, we'll be off now. [*She goes over to the door left, and speaks to* Boyle *inside.*

Mrs. Boyle: We're goin' now to the doctor's. Are you goin' to get up this evenin'?

Boyle: (*from inside*). The pains in me legs is terrible! It's me should be poppin' off to the doctor instead o' Mary, the way I feel.

Mrs. Boyle: Sorra mend you![1] A nice way you were in last night — carried in in a frog's march, dead to the world. It that's the way you'll go on when you get the money it'll be the grave for you, an asylum for me and the Poorhouse for Johnny.

Boyle: I thought you were goin'?

Mrs. Boyle: That's what has you as you are — you can't bear to be spoken to. Knowin' the way we are, up to our ears in debt, it's a wondher you wouldn't ha' got up to go to th' solicitor's an' see if we could ha' gotten a little o' the money even.

Boyle: (*shouting*). I can't be goin' up there night, noon an' mornin', can I? He can't give the money till he gets it, can he? I can't get blood out of a turnip, can I?

Mrs. Boyle: It's nearly two months since we heard of the Will, an' the money seems as far off as ever — I suppose you know we owe twenty pouns to oul' Murphy?

Boyle: I've a faint recollection of you tellin' me that before.

Mrs. Boyle: Well, you'll go over to the shop yourself for the things in future — I'll face him no more.

Boyle: I thought you said you were goin'?

Mrs. Boyle: I'm goin' now; come on, Mary.

Boyle: Ey, Juno, ey!

Mrs. Boyle: Well, what d'ye want now?

Boyle: Is there e'er a bottle o' stout left?

Mrs. Boyle: There's two o' them here still.

Boyle: Show us in one o' them an' leave t'other there till I get up. An' throw us in the paper that's on the table, an' the bottle o' Sloan's Liniment that's in the drawer.

Mrs. Boyle: (*getting the liniment and the stout*). What paper is it you want — the *Messenger*?[2]

Boyle: *Messenger*! The *News o' the World*!

[Mrs. Boyle *brings in the things asked for, and comes out again.*]

Mrs. Boyle: (*at door*). Mind the candle, now, an' don't burn the house over our heads. I left t'other bottle o' stout on the table. [She puts bottle of stout on table. She goes out with Mary. A cork is heard popping inside.

[*A pause; then outside the door is heard the voice of* Joxer *lilting softly: 'Me pipe I'll smoke, as I dhrive me moke…are you…there…Mor…ee.,..ar…i…teee!' A gentle knock is heard, and after a pause the door opens, and* Joxer, *followed by* Nugent, *enters.*]

Joxer: Be God, they must be all out; I was thinkin' there was somethin' up when he didn't answer the signal. We seen Juno an' Mary goin', but I didn't see him, an' it's very seldom he escapes me.

Nugent: He's not goin' to escape me — he's not goin' to be let go to the fair altogether.

Joxer: Sure, the house couldn't hould them lately; an' he goin' about like a mastherpiece of the Free State counthry; forgettin' their friends; forgettin' God — wouldn't even lift his hat passin' a chapel! Sure they were bound to get a dhrop! An' you really think there's no money comin' to him afther all?

Nugent: Not as much as a red rex, man; I've been a bit anxious this long time over me money, an' I

1. Good enough for you.
2. A Roman Catholic magazine.

went up to the solicitor's to find our all I could — ah, man, they were goin' to throw me down the stairs. They toul' me that the oul' cock himself had the stairs worn away comin' up afther it, an' they black in the face tellin' him he'd get nothin'. Some way or another that the Will is writ he won't be entitled to get as much as a make!

Joxer: Ah, I thought there was somethin' curious about the whole thing; I've bin havin' sthrange dhreams for the last couple o' weeks. An' I notice that that Bentham fella doesn't be comin' here now — there must be somethin' on the mat there too. Anyhow, who, in the name o' God, ud leave anythin' to that oul' bummer? Sure it ud be unnatural. An' the way Juno an' him's been throwin' their weight about for the last few months! Ah, him that goes a borrowin' goes a sorrowin'!

Nugent: Well, he's not goin' to throw his weight about in the suit I made for him much longer. I'm tellin' you seven pouns aren't to be found growin' on the bushes these days.

Joxer: An' there isn't hardly a neighbour in the whole street that hasn't lent him money on the strength of what he was goin' to get, but they're after backing the wrong horse. Wasn't it a mercy o' God that I'd nothin' to give him! The softy I am, you know, I'd ha' lent him me last juice! I must have had somebody's good prayers. Ah, afther all, an honest man's the noblest work o' God!

[Boyle *coughs inside*.]

Joxer: Whisht, damn it, he must be inside in bed.

Nugent: Inside o' bed or outside of it, he's goin' to pay me for that suit, or give it back — he'll not climb up my back as easily as he thinks.

Joxer: Gwan in at wanst, man, an' get it off him, an' don't be a fool.

Nugent: (*going to door left, opening it and looking in*). Ah, don't disturb yourself, Mr. Boyle; I hope you're not sick?

Boyle: Th' oul' legs, Mr. Nugent, the oul' legs.

Nugent: I just called over to see if you could let me have anything off the suit?

Boyle: E-e-e-eh, how much is this it is?

Nugent: It's the same as it was at the start — seven pouns.

Boyle: I'm glad you kem, Mr. Nugent; I want a good heavy top-coat — Irish frieze, if you have it. How much would a top-coat like that be, now?

Nugent: About six pouns.

Boyle: Six pouns — six an' seven is thirteen — that'll be thirteen pouns I'll owe you.

[Joxer *slips the bottle of stout that is on the table into his pocket. Nugent rushes into the room, and returns with suit on his arm; he pauses at the door.*]

Nugent: You'll owe me no thirteen pouns. Maybe you think you're betther able to owe it than pay it!

Boyle: (*frantically*). Here, come back to hell ower that — where're you goin' with them clothes o' mine?

Nugent: Where am I goin' with them clothes o' yours? Well, I like your damn cheek!

Boyle: Here, what am I goin' to dhress meself in when I'm goin' out?

Nugent: What do I care what you dhress yourself in! You can put yourself in a bolsther cover, if you like.

[*He goes towards the other door, followed by* Joxer.]

Joxer: What'll he dhress himself in! Gentleman Jack an' his frieze coat! [*They go out.*]

Boyle: (*inside*). Ey, Nugent; ey, Mr. Nugent, Mr. Nugent!

[*After a pause,* Boyle *enters hastily, buttoning the braces of his moleskin trousers; his coat and vest are on his arm; he throws these on a chair and hurries to the door on right.*]

Joxer: (*meeting him at the door*). What's up, what's wrong, Captain?

Boyle: Nugent's been here an' took away me suit — the only things I had to go out in!

Joxer: Tuk your suit — for God's sake! An' what were you doin' while he was takin' them?

Boyle: I was in bed when he stole in like a thief in the night, an' before I knew even what he was thinkin' of, he whipped them from the chair an' was off like a redshank!

Joxer: An' what, in the name o' God, did he do that for?

Boyle: What did he do it for? How the hell do I know what he done it for? — jealousy an' spite, I suppose.

Joxer: Did he not say what he done it for?

Boyle: Amn't I afther tellin' you that he had them whipped up an' was gone before I could open me mouth?

Joxer: That was a very sudden thing to do; there mus' be somethin' behin' it. Did he hear anythin', I wondher?

Boyle: Did he hear anythin'? — you talk very queer, Joxer — what could he hear?

Joxer: About you not gettin' the money, in some way or t'other?

Boyle: An' what ud prevent me from gettin' th' money?

Joxer: That's jus' what I was thinkin' — what ud prevent you from gettin' the money — nothin', as far as I can see.

Boyle: (*looking round for bottle of stout, with an exclamation*). Aw, holy God!

Joxer: What's up, Jack?

Boyle: He must have afther lifted the bottle o' stout that Juno left on the table!

Joxer: (*horrified*). Ah no, ah no; he wouldn't be afther doin' that now.

Boyle: An' who done it then? Juno left a bottle o' stout here, an' it's gone — it didn't walk, did it?

Joxer: Oh, that's shockin'; ah, man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn![3]

Mrs. Madigan: (*appearing at the door*). I hope I'm not disturbin' you in any discussion on your forthcomin' legacy — if I may use the word — an' that you'll let me have a barny for a minute or two with you, Mr. Boyle.

Boyle: (*uneasily*). To be sure, Mrs. Madigan — an oul' friend's always welcome.

Joxer: Come in the evenin', come in th' mornin'; come when you're assed, or come without warnin', Mrs. Madigan.

Boyle: Sit down, Mrs. Madigan.

Mrs. Madigan: (*ominously*). Th' few words I have to say can be said standin'. Puttin' aside all formularies, I suppose you remember me lendin' you some time ago three pouns that I raised on blankets an' furniture in me uncle's?

Boyle: I remember it well. I have it recorded in me book — three pouns five shillings from Maisie Madigan, raised on articles pawned; an', item: fourpence, given to make up the price of a pint, on th' principle that no bird ever flew on wan wing; all to be repaid at par, when the ship comes home.

Mrs. Madigan: Well, ever since I shoved in the blankets I've been perishing with th' cowld, an' I've decided, if I'll be too hot in th' next' world aself, I'm not goin' to be too cowld in this wan; an' consequently, I want me three pouns, if you please.

Boyle: This is a very sudden demand, Mrs. Madigan, an' can't be met; but I'm willin' to give you a receipt in full, in full.

Mrs. Madigan: Come on, out with th' money, an' don't be jack-actin'.

Boyle: You can't get blood out of a turnip, can you?

Mrs. Madigan: (*rushing over and shaking him*). Gimme me money, y'oul' reprobate, or I'll shake the worth of it out of you!

Boyle: Ey, houl' on, there; houl' on, there! You'll wait for your money now, me lassie!

Mrs. Madigan: (*looking around the room and seeing the gramophone*). I'll wait for it, will I? Well,

3. From the Robert Burns poem "Man was made to mourn: A Dirge" (1784).

I'll not wait long; if I can't get th' cash, I'll get th' worth of it.[*She catches up the gramophone.*

Boyle: Ey, ey, there, wher'r you goin' with that?

Mrs. Madigan: I'm goin' to th' pawn to get me three quid five shillings; I'll brin' you th' ticket, an' then you can do what you like, me bucko.

Boyle: You can't touch that, you can't touch that! It's not my property, an' it's not ped for yet!

Mrs. Madigan: So much th' better. It'll be an ayse to me conscience, for I'm takin' what doesn't belong to you. You're not goin' to be swankin' it like a paycock with Maisie Madigan's money — I'll pull some o' th' gorgeous feathers out o' your tail! [*She goes off with the gramophone.*

Boyle: What's th' world comin' to at all? I ass you, Joxer Daly, is there any morality left anywhere?

Joxer: I wouldn't ha' believed it, only I seen it with me own two eyes. I didn't think Maisie Madigan was that sort of woman; she has either a sup taken, or she's heard somethin'.

Boyle: Heard somethin' — about what, if it's not any harm to ass you?

Joxer: She must ha' heard some rumour or other that you weren't goin' to get th' money.

Boyle: Who says I'm not goin' to get th' money?

Joxer: Sure, I don't know — I was only sayin'.

Boyle: Only sayin' what?

Joxer: Nothin'.

Boyle: You were goin' to say somethin' — don't be a twisther.

Joxer: (*angrily*). Who's a twisther?

Boyle: Why don't you speak your mind, then?

Joxer: You never twisted yourself — no, you wouldn't know how!

Boyle: Did you ever know me to twist; did you ever know me to twist?

Joxer: (*fiercely*). Did you ever do anythin' else! Sure, you can't believe a word that comes out o' your mouth.

Boyle: Here, get out, ower o' this; I always knew you were a prognosticator an' a procrastinator!

Joxer: (*Going out as* Johnny *comes in*). The anchor's weighed, farewell, ree…mem…ber… me. Jacky Boyle, Esquire, infernal rogue an' damned liar.

Johnny: Joxer an' you at it agen? — when are you goin' to have a little respect for yourself, an' not be always makin' a show of us all?

Boyle: Are you goin' to lecture me now?

Johnny: Is mother back from the doctor yet, with Mary?

[Mrs. Boyle *enters; it is apparent from the serious look on her face that something has happened. She takes off her hat and coat without a word and puts them by. She then sits down near the fire, and there is a few moments' pause.*]

Boyle: Well, what did the doctor say about Mary?

Mrs. Boyle: (*in an earnest manner and with suppressed agitation*). Sit down here, Jack; I've something to say to you — about Mary.

Boyle: (*awed by her manner*). About — Mary?

Mrs. Boyle: Close that door there and sit down here.

Boyle: (*closing the door*). More trouble in our native land, is it? (*He sits down.*) Well, what is it?

Mrs. Boyle: It's about Mary.

Boyle: Well, what about Mary — there's nothin' wrong with her, is there?

Mrs. Boyle: I'm sorry to say there's a gradle wrong with her.

Boyle: A gradle wrong with her! (*Peevishly*) First Johnny an' now Mary; is the whole house goin' to become an hospital! It's not consumption, is it?

Mrs. Boyle: No — it's not consumption — it's worse.

Johnny: Worse! Well, we'll have to get her into some place ower this, there's no one here to mind

her.

Mrs. Boyle: We'll all have to mind her now. You might as well know now, Johnny, as another time. (*To* Boyle). D'ye know what the doctor said to me about her, Jack?

Boyle: How ud I know — I wasn't there, was I?

Mrs. Boyle: He told me to get her married at wanst.

Boyle: Married at wanst! An' why did he say the like o' that?

Mrs. Boyle: Because Mary's goin' to have a baby in a short time.

Boyle: Goin' to have a baby! — my God, what'll Bentham say when he hears that?

Mrs. Boyle: Are you blind, man, that you can't see that it was Bentham that has done this wrong to her?

Boyle: (*passionately*). Then he'll marry her, he'll have to marry her!

Mrs. Boyle: You know he's gone to England, an' God knows where he is now.

Boyle: I'll folly him, I'll folly him, an' bring him back, an' make him do her justice. The scoundrel, I might ha' known what he was, with his yogees an' his prawna!

Mrs. Boyle: We'll have to keep it quiet till we see what we can do.

Boyle: Oh, isn't this a nice thing to come on top o' me, an' the state I'm in! A pretty show I'll be to Joxer an' to that oul' wan, Madigan! Amn't I afther goin' through enough without havin' to go through this!

Mrs. Boyle: What you an' I'll have to to through'll be nothin' to what poor Mary'll have to go through; for you an' me is middlin' old, an' most of our years is spent; but Mary'll have maybe forty years to face an' handle, an' every wan of them'll be tainted with a bitter memory.

Boyle: Where is she? Where is she till I tell her off? I'm tellin' you when I'm done with her she'll be a sorry girl!

Mrs. Boyle: I left her in me sister's till I came to speak to you. You'll say nothin' to her, Jack; ever since she left school she's earned her livin', an' your fatherly care never throubled the poor girl.

Boyle: Gwan, take her part agen her father! But I'll let you see whether I'll say nothin' to her or no! Her an' her readin'! That's more o' th' blasted nonsense that has the house fallin' down on top of us! What did th' likes of her, born in a tenement house, want with readin'? Her readin's afther bringin' her to a nice pass — oh, it's madnin', madnin', madnin'.

Mrs. Boyle: When she comes back say nothin' to her, Jack, or she'll leave this place.

Boyle: Leave this place! Ay, she'll leave this place, an' quick too!

Mrs. Boyle: If Mary goes, I'll go with her.

Boyle: Well, go with her! Well, go, th' pair o' yous! I lived before I seen yous, an' I can live when yous are gone. Isn't this a nice thing to come rollin' in on top o' me afther all your prayin' to St. Anthony an' The Little Flower! An' she's a Child o' Mary,[4] too — I wonder what'll the nuns think of her now? An' it'll be bellows'd all over th' disthrict before you could say Jack Robinson; an' whenever I'm seen they'll whisper, "That's th' father of Mary Boyle that had th' kid be th' swank she used to go with; d'ye know, d'ye know?" To be sure they'll know — more about it than I will meself!

Johnny: She should be dhriven out o' th' house she's brought disgrace on!

Mrs. Boyle: Hush, you, Johnny. We needn't let it be bellows'd all over the place; all we've got to do is to leave this place quietly an' go somewhere where we're not known an' nobody'll be th' wiser.

Boyle: You're talkin' like a two-year-oul', woman. Where'll we get a place ou' o' this? — places aren't that easily got.

Mrs. Boyle: But, Jack, when we get the money…

Boyle: Money — what money?

4. A member of a Roman Catholic confraternity devoted to the Virgin Mary.

Mrs. Boyle: Why, oul' Ellison's money, of course.

Boyle: There's no money comin' from oul' Ellison, or any one else. Since you've heard of wan throuble, you might as well hear of another. There's no money comin' to us at all — the Will's a wash-out!

Mrs. Boyle: What are you sayin', man — no money?

Johnny: How could it be a wash-out?

Boyle: The boyo that's afther doin' it to Mary done it to me as well. The thick made out the Will wrong; he said in th' Will, only first cousin an' second cousin, instead of mentionin' our names, an' now any one that thinks he's a first cousin or second cousin t'oul' Ellison can claim the money as well as me, an' they're springin' up in hundreds, an' comin' from America an' Australia, thinkin' to get their whack out of it, while all the time the lawyers is gobblin' it up, till there's not as much as ud buy a stockin' for your lovely daughter's baby!

Mrs. Boyle: I don't believe it, I don't believe it, I don't believe it!

Johnny: Why did you say nothin' about this before?

Mrs. Boyle: You're not serious, Jack; you're not serious!

Boyle: I'm tellin' you the scholar, Bentham, made a banjax o' th' Will; instead o' sayin', 'th' rest o' me property to be divided between me first cousin, Jack Boyle, an' me second cousin, Mick Finnegan, o' Santhry', he writ down only, 'me first an' second cousins', an' the world an' his wife are afther th' property now.

Mrs. Boyle: Now I know why Bentham left poor Mary in th' lurch; I can see it all now — oh, is there not even a middlin' honest man left in th' world?

Johnny: An' you let us run into debt, an' you borreyed money from everybody to fill yourself with beer! An' now you tell us the whole thing's a washout! Oh, if it's thrue, I'm done with you, for you're worse than me sisther Mary!

Boyle: You hole your tongue, d'ye hear? I'll not take any lip from you. Go an' get Bentham if you want satisfaction for all that's afther happenin' us.

Johnny: I won't hole me tongue, I won't hole me tongue! I'll tell you what I think of you, father an' all as you are — you…

Mrs. Boyle: Johnny, Johnny, Johnny, for God's sake, be quiet!

Johnny: I'll not be quiet, I'll not be quiet; he's a nice father, isn't he? Is it any wondher Mary went asthray, when…

Mrs. Boyle: Johnny, Johnny, for my sake be quiet — for your mother's sake!

Boyle: I'm goin' out now to have a few dhrinks with th' last few makes I have, an' tell that lassie o' yours not to be here when I come back; for if I lay me eyes on her, I'll lay me hans on her, an' if I lay me hans on her, I won't be accountable for me actions!

Johnny: Take care somebody doesn't lay his hans on you — y'oul'…

Mrs. Boyle: Johnny, Johnny!

Boyle: (*at door, about to go out*). Oh, a nice son, an' a nicer daughter, I have. (*Calling loudly up stairs*). Joxer, Joxer, are you there?

Joxer: (*from a distance*). I'm here, More…ee…aar…i…tee!

Boyle: I'm goin' down to Foley's — are you comin'?

Joxer: Come with you? With that sweet call me heart is stirred; I'm only waiting for the word, an' I'll be with you, like a bird!

[Boyle *and* Joxer *pass the door going out.*]

Johnny: (*throwing himself on the bed*). I've a nice sisther, an' a nice father, there's no bettin' on it. I wish to God a bullet or a bomb had whipped me ou' o' this long ago! Not one o' yous, not one o' yous, have any thought for me!

Mrs. Boyle: (*with passionate remonstrance*). If you don't whisht, Johnny, you'll drive me mad. Who has kep' th' home together for the past few years — only me? An' who'll have to bear th' biggest part o' this throuble but me? — but whinin' an' whingin' isn't goin' to do any good.

Johnny: You're to blame yourself for a gradle of it — givin' him his own way in everything, an' never assin' to check him, no matther what he done. Why didn't you look afther th' money? why…

[*There is a knock at the door; Mrs. Boyle opens it; Johnny rises on his elbows to look and listen; two men enter.*]

First Man: We've been sent up be th' Manager of the Hibernian Furnishing Co., Mrs. Boyle, to take back the furniture that was got a while ago.

Mrs. Boyle: Yous'll touch nothin' here — how do I know who yous are?

First Man: (*showing a paper*). There's the ordher, ma'am. (*Reading*) A chest o' drawers, a table, wan easy an' two ordinary chairs; wan mirror; wan chestherfield divan, an' a wardrobe an' two vases. (*To his comrade*) Come on, Bill, it's afther knockin'-off time already.

Johnny: For God's sake, mother, run down to Foley's an' bring father back, or we'll be left without a stick.

[*The men carry out the table.*]

Mrs. Boyle: What good would it be? — you heard what he said before he went out.

Johnny: Can't you thry? He ought to be here, an' the like of this goin' on.

[Mrs. Boyle *puts a shawl around her, as* Mary *enters.*]

Mary: What's up, mother? I met men carryin' away the table, an' everybody's talking about us not gettin' the money after all.

Mrs. Boyle: Everythin's gone wrong, Mary, everythin'. We're not gettin' a penny out o' the Will, not a penny — I'll tell you all when I come back; I'm goin' for your father. [*She runs out.* **Johnny:** (*to Mary, who has sat down by the fire*). It's a wondher you're not ashamed to show your face here, afther what has happened.

[Jerry *enters slowly; there is a look of earnest hope on his face. He looks at Mary for a few moments.*]

Jerry: (*softly*). Mary! [Mary *does not answer*.]

Jerry: Mary, I want to speak to you for a few moments, may I? [Mary *remains silent;* Johnny *goes slowly into room on left*.]

Jerry: Your mother has told me everything, Mary, and I have come to you — I have come to tell you, Mary, that my love for you is greater and deeper than ever…

Mary: (*with a sob*). Oh, Jerry, Jerry, say no more; all that is over now; anything like that is impossible now!

Jerry: Impossible? Why do you talk like that, Mary?

Mary: After all that has happened.

Jerry: What does it matter what has happened? We are young enough to be able to forget all those things. (*He catches her hand*). Mary, Mary, I am pleading for your love. With Labour, Mary, humanity is above everything; we are the Leaders in the fight for a new life. I want to forget Bentham, I want to forget that you left me — even for a while.

Mary: Oh, Jerry, Jerry, you haven't the bitter word of scorn for me after all.

Jerry: (*passionately*). Scorn! I love you, love you, Mary!

Mary: (*rising, and looking him in the eyes*). Even though…

Jerry: Even though you threw me over for another man; even though you gave me many a bitter word!

Mary: Yes, yes, I know; but you love me even though — even though — I'm — goin' — goin' – (*He looks at her questioningly, and fear gathers in his eyes*.) Ah, I was thinkin' so — You don't know everything!

Jerry: (*poignantly*). Surely to God, Mary, you don't mean that — that — that…

Mary: Now you know all, Jerry; now you know all!

Jerry: My God, Mary, have you fallen as low as that?

Mary: Yes, Jerry, as you say, I have fallen as low as that.

Jerry: I didn't mean it that way, Mary — it came on me so sudden, that I didn't mind what I was sayin' — I never expected this — your mother never told me — I'm sorry — God knows, I'm sorry for you, Mary.

Mary: Let us say no more, Jerry; I don't blame you for thinkin' it's terrible — I suppose it is — Everybody'll think the same — it's only as I expected — your humanity is just as narrow as the humanity of the others.

Jerry: I'm sorry, all the same — I shouldn't have troubled you — I wouldn't if I'd known — If I can do anything for you — Mary — I will. [*He turns to go, and halts at the door.*]

Mary: Do you remember, Jerry, the verses you read when you gave the lecture in the Socialist Rooms some time ago, on Humanity's Strife with Nature?

Jerry: The verses — no; I don't remember them.

Mary: I do. They're runnin' in me head now –

An' we felt the power that fashion'd
All the lovely things we saw,
That created all the murmur
Of an everlasting law,
Was a hand of force an' beauty,
With an eagle's tearin' claw.

Then we saw our globe of beauty
Was an ugly thing as well,
A hymn divine whose chorus
Was an agonizin' yell;
Like the story of a demon,
That an angel had to tell;

Like a glowin' picture by a
Hand unsteady, brought to ruin;
Like her craters, if their deadness
Could give life unto the moon;
Like the agonizing horror
Of a violin out of tune.

[*There is a pause, and* Devine *goes slowly out.*]

Johnny: (*returning*)**.** Is he gone?

Mary: Yes. [*The two men re-enter.*]

First Man: We can't wait any longer for t'oul' fella — sorry, Miss, but we have to live as well as th' nex' man. [*They carry out some things*.]

Johnny: Oh, isn't this terrible! — I suppose you told him everything — couldn't you have waited for a few days? — he'd have stopped th' takin' of the things, if you'd kep' your mouth shut. Are you burnin' to tell every one of the shame you've brought on us?

Mary: (*snatching up her hat and coat*). Oh, this is unbearable! [*She rushes out.*

First Man: (*re-entering*). We'll take the chest o' drawers next — it's the heaviest.

[*The votive light flickers for a moment, and goes out.*]

Johnny: (*in a cry of fear*). Mother o' God, the light's afther goin' out!

First Man: You put the win' up me the way you bawled that time. The oil's all gone, that's all.

Johnny: (*with an agonizing cry*). Mother o' God, there's a shot I'm afther gettin'!

First Man: What's wrong with you, man? Is it a fit you're takin'?

Johnny: I'm afther feelin' a pain in me breast, like the tearin' by of a bullet!

First Man: He's goin' mad — it's a wondher they'd leave a chap like that here by himself.

[*Two Irregulars enter swiftly; they carry revolvers; one goes over to* Johnny*; the other covers the two furniture men.*]

First Irregular: (*to the men, quietly and incisively*). Who are you? — what are yous doin' here? — quick!

[*The two men turn their faces to the wall, with their hands up.*]

First Man: Removin' furniture that's not paid for.

Irregular: Get over to the other end of the room an' turn your faces to the wall — quick!

Second Irregular: Come on, Sean Boyle, you're wanted; some of us have a word to say to you.

Johnny: I'm sick, I can't — what do you want with me?

Second Irregular: Come on, come on; we've a distance to go, an' haven't much time — come on.

Johnny: I'm an oul' comrade — yous wouldn't shoot an oul' comrade.

Second Irregular: Poor Tancred was an oul' comrade o' yours, but you didn't think o' that when you gave him away to the gang that sent him to his grave. But we've no time to waste; come on — here, Dermot, ketch his arm. (*To* Johnny) Have you your beads?

Johnny: Me beads! Why do you ass me that, why do you ass me that?

Second Irregular: Go on, go on, march!

Johnny: Are yous goin' to do in a comrade? — look at me arm, I lost it for Ireland.

Second Irregular: Commandant Tancred lost his life for Ireland.

Johnny: Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on me! Mother o' God, pray for me — be with me now in the agonies o' death! — Hail Mary, full o' grace — the Lord is — with Thee.

[*They drag out* Johnny Boyle*, and the curtain falls. When it rises again the most of the furniture is gone.* Mary *and* Mrs. Boyle*, one on each side, are sitting in a darkened room, by the fire; it is an hour later.*]

Mrs. Boyle: I'll not wait much longer — what did they bring him away in the mothor for? Nugent says he thinks they had guns — is me throubles never goin' to be over? — If anything ud happen to poor Johnny, I think I'd lose me mind — I'll go to the Police Station, surely they ought to be able to do somethin'.

[*Below is heard the sound of voices.*]

Mrs. Boyle: Whisht, is that something? Maybe, it's your father, though when I left him in Foley's he was hardly able to life his head. Whisht!

[*A knock at the door, and the voice of* Mrs. Madigan, *speaking very softly*]:

Mrs. Madigan: Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Boyle. [*Mrs. Boyle opens the door.*

Mrs. Madigan: Oh, Mrs. Boyle, God an' His Blessed Mother be with you this night!

Mrs. Boyle: (*calmly*). What is it, Mrs. Madigan? It's Johnny — something about Johnny.

Mrs. Madigan: God send it's not, God send it's not Johnny!

Mrs. Boyle: Don't keep me waitin', Mrs. Madigan; I've gone through so much lately that I feel able for anything.

Mrs. Madigan: Two polismen below wantin' you.

Mrs. Boyle: Wantin' me; an' why do they want me?

Mrs. Madigan: Some poor fella's been found, an' they think it's, it's…

Mrs. Boyle: Johnny, Johnny!

Mary: (*with her arms round her mother*). Oh, mother, mother, me poor, darlin' mother.

Mrs. Boyle: Hush, hush, darlin'; you'll shortly have your own throuble to bear. (*To* Mrs. Madigan)

An’ why do the polis think it’s Johnny, Mrs. Madigan?

Mrs. Madigan: Because one o’ the doctors knew him when he was attendin’ with his poor arm.

Mrs. Boyle: Oh, it’s thrue, then; it’s Johnny, it’s me son, me own son!

Mary: Oh, it’s thrue, it’s thrue what Jerry Devine says — there isn’t a God, there isn’t a God; if there was He wouldn’t let these things happen!

Mrs. Boyle: Mary, you mustn’t say them things. We’ll want all the help we can get from God an’ His Blessed Mother now! These things have nothin’ to do with the Will o’ God. Ah, what can God do agen the stupidity o’ men!

Mrs. Madigan: The polis want you to go with them to the hospital to see the poor body — they’re waitin’ below.

Mrs. Boyle: We’ll go. Come, Mary, an’ we’ll never come back here agen. Let your father furrage for himself now; I’ve done all I could an’ it was all no use — he’ll be hopeless till the end of his days. I’ve got a little room in me sisther’s where we’ll stop till your throuble is over, an’ then we’ll work together for the sake of the baby.

Mary: My poor little child that’ll have no father!

Mrs. Boyle: It’ll have what’s far betther — it’ll have two mothers.

*A Rough Voice shouting from below***:** Are yous goin’ to keep us waitin’ for yous all night?

Mrs. Madigan: (*going to the door, and shouting down*). Take you hour, there, take your hour! If yous are in such a hurry, skip off, then, for nobody wants you here — if they did yous wouldn’t be found. For you’re the same as yous were undher the British Government — never where yous are wanted! As far as I can see, the Polis as Polis, in this city, is Null an’ Void!

Mrs. Boyle: We’ll go, Mary, we’ll go; you to see your poor dead brother, an’ me to see me poor dead son!

Mary: I dhread it, mother, I dhread it!

Mrs. Boyle: I forgot, Mary, I forgot; your poor oul’ selfish mother was only thinkin’ of herself. No, no, you mustn’t come — it wouldn’t be good for you. You go on to me sisther’s an’ I’ll face th’ ordeal meself. Maybe I didn’t feel sorry enough for Mrs. Tancred when her poor son was found as Johnny’s been found now — because he was a Diehard! Ah, why didn’t I remember that then he wasn’t a Diehard or a Stater, but only a poor dead son! It’s well I remember all that she said — an’ it’s my turn to say it now : What was the pain I suffered, Johnny, bringin’ you into the world to carry you to your cradle, to the pains I’ll suffer carryin’ you out o’ the world to bring you to your grave! Mother o’ God, Mother o’ God, have pity on us all! Blessed Virgin, where were you when me darlin’ son was riddled with bullets, when me darlin’ son was riddled with bullets? Sacred Heart o’ Jesus, take away our hearts o’ stone, and give us hearts o’ flesh! Take away this murdherin’ hate, an’ give us Thine own eternal love! [*They all go slowly out.*

[*There is a pause; then a sound of shuffling steps on the stairs outside. The door opens and* Boyle *and* Joxer, *both of them very drunk, enter.*]

Boyle: I’m able to go no farther — Two polis, ey — what were they doin’ here, I wondher? — Up to no good, anyhow — an Juno an’ that lovely daughter o’ mine with them. (*Taking a sixpence from his pocket and looking at it*) Wan single, solitary tanner left out of all I borreyed – (*He lets it fall.*) The last o’ the Mohicans — The blinds is down, Joxer, the blinds is down![5]

Joxer: (*walking unsteadily across the room, and anchoring at the bed*). Put all — your throubles — in your oul’ kit-bag — an’ smile — smile — smile!

Boyle: The counthry’ll have to steady itself — it’s goin’ — to hell — Where’r all — the chairs —

5. A reference to the custom of lowering the blinds when there has been a death in the house or when a funeral procession was passing the house. See the last line of Wilfred Owen’s poem “Anthem for Doomed Youth” and D. H. Lawrence's “The Horse Dealer’s Daughter.”

gone to — steady itself, Joxer — Chairs'll — have to — steady themselves — No matther — what any one may — say — Irelan' sober — is Irelan' — free.

Joxer: (*stretching himself on the bed*). Chains — an' — slaveree — that's a darlin' motto — a daaarlin' — motto!

Boyle: If th' worst comes — to th' worse — I can join a — flyin' — column[6] — I done — me bit — in Easther Week — had no business — to — be — there — but Captain Boyle's Captain Boyle!

Joxer: Breathes there a man with soul — so — de…ad — this — me — o…wn, me nat…ive l…an'![7]

Boyle: (subsiding into a sitting position on the floor). Commandant Kelly died — in them — arms — Joxer — Tell me Volunteer[8] Butties — says he — that — I died for — Irelan'!

Joxer: D'jever rade Willie — Reilly — an' his own — Colleen — Bawn? It's a darlin' story, a daarlin' story![9]

Boyle: I'm telling you — Joxer — th' whole worl's — in a terr…ible state o' — chassis!

CURTAIN

6. Units of mobile IRA personnel, engaged in guerrilla tactics.
7. From Sir Walter Scott "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" (1805).
8. Irish Volunteer Army, established in 1913 by Irish nationalists.
9. A popular story of 18th-century Catholic-Protestant love, Willy Reilly and His Dear Colleen Bawn by William Carleton (1855) a version of which was filmed in 1920.

151.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

Act I

1. Why does Boyle call himself "Captain"?
2. Identify Jerry Devine.
3. Why does Juno not want to leave for work before the captain begins his breakfast?
4. Why is Mary on strike?
5. What is the main difference between a "die-hard" and a "free-stater"?
6. What faction did Robbie Tancred side with in the Civil War?
7. What is the comic significance of the coal-vendor?
8. Why does Mary pay so little attention to Jerry?
9. Why is Joxer afraid to stick his head out of the window?
10. What plan do Joxer and the captain make in case they are surprised by Juno?
11. Why does the captain come to the conclusion that Devine is "not like a Christian at all"?
12. How does Boyle turn Father Farrell's offer of help into an attack on the clergy?
13. To what is Johnny referring when he boasts that "Ireland only half free will never be at peace while she has a son left to pull the trigger"?
14. What news does Bentham bring?

Act II

1. Does Boyle continue to attack the clergy?
2. What words of Mrs Tancred in Act II does Juno repeat in Act III?
3. What is the thematic role of Bentham's theosophy?
4. Why is the will a "washout"?

Act III

1. Find one of Mrs Madigan's malapropisms in Act III.
2. Comment on Devine's words, "Mary, humanity is above everything."
3. What does Boyle mean when near the end of the play he speaks of his "Volunteer butties"?

Short Essay Questions

1. Discuss irony in the play.
2. Show how Boyle is not the only person guilty of "peacockery" in the play.
3. What are some uses O'Casey makes of song in the play?
4. How is Capt. Boyle a *miles gloriosus* figure?
5. Discuss Joxer Daly as a type of comic "parasite" as in Ben Jonson.
6. Compare Capt. Jack with Shakespeare's Falstaff.
7. Compare Maisie Madigan and Chaucer's Wyf of Bath or Shakespeare's Mistress Quickly.
8. The song "Young Cassidy" is not sung in the play, but it is a tribute to Sean O'Casey. Demonstrate why this is so. You will need to do a little biographical research.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?p=949

QR Code Young Cassidy

Longer Essays

1. "Many characters invest all of their energy into words rather than deeds." (Christopher Murray, *Sean O'Casey*.) Do you agree?
2. Discuss naturalism in *Juno and Paycock.*
3. "The play attacks all kinds of idealism." Discuss with reference to three or four characters.
4. Discuss *Juno and the Paycock* as tragicomedy.
5. Discuss illusion and reality in *Juno and the Paycock*.
6. Do you agree with critic James Agate's assessment in his review of a 1925 London production, that "*Juno and the Paycock* is as much a tragedy as *Macbeth*, but it is a tragedy taking place in the porter's family"?
7. Evaluate Alfred Hitchcock's 1930 film adaptation of *Juno and the Paycock*.

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   QR Code Juno and the Paycock Film Adaption

8. Discuss Juno *and the Paycock* as a feminist play.

Activities

1. Read Richard F. Dietrich's online chapter from his *British Drama 1890-1950*, pp. 208-222. It provides useful biographical and textual information.
2. Read the program from a 1988 production of *Juno and the Paycock* at the University of British Columbia. It contains some helpful biographical and contextual essays, especially on the Irish Civil War.
3. Listen to a superb recording of *Juno and the Paycock*, with an introduction by Sean O'Casey.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?p=949

QR Code Juno and the Paycock Recording

4. View the first play in the *Dublin Trilogy, The Shadow of a Gunman*, which treats the Irish War of Independence (Anglo-Irish War) of 1919-1921.

QR Code The Shadow of a Gunman

5. An informative and easy-to-navigate resource pack from the Abbey Theater for their 2012 production of *The Plough and the Stars*. "Politics and History" pp. 12-19 are particularly useful.
6. A useful website from W.W. Norton. Focus on the material on the The Easter Rebellion of 1916.
7. *The Story of Ireland*. A BBC/RTE television documentary in 5 parts. Parts 4 and 5 are the most useful. Currently available on YouTube. Introduced by Fergal Keane.

Resources

Song References: *Juno and Paycock*

(Yes,) Let Me Like a Soldier Fall

Full text *Plough and the Stars* (in *Twenty-five Modern Plays*, S. Marion Tucker, ed., pp. 721-65).

Full text *Shadow of a Gunman* (in *1000 Years of Irish Prose*, V. Mercier and David H. Greene, eds. pp. 247-94).

Sean O'Casey Early Plays as Larkinite Stage Parables by Mary Elizabeth Papke.

XXII

Virginia Woolf (1882–1941)

152.

Biography



Figure 1: Virginia Woolf

Virginia Woolf was born into late-Victorian London on January 25, 1882. Her mother was Julia Stephen (1846-1895), famous in the artistic and literary world for her beauty and in high demand for her skills as an informal nurse. Woolf's father was Sir Leslie Stephen (1832-1904), a well-known literary critic and founder of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, who struggled with a sense of inadequacy in spite of his reputation. The family lived at 22 Hyde Park Gate in London and rented a summer house at St. Ives in Cornwall. The children grew up with governesses, and while the boys went on to school and university, the girls received much less formal education, a particularly sore point with Woolf, and a spur for her feminism. However, she read hugely from her father's library, and developed a formidable and individual intellect. Her parents' literary circle also helped to develop the foundations of her writing and thought.

Julia and Leslie had each been married previously. With his first wife, Minny Thackeray (1840-1875), Leslie had a daughter, Laura (1870-1884). He floundered at being widowed and left to bring up the young girl, who had increasing emotional and developmental problems. Julia, a friend of Minny's, seemed a lifeline. She had had three children with Herbert Duckworth (1833-1870), whose sudden death gave her the sorrow that many friends saw as her main characteristic. George (1868-1934), Stella (1869-1897), and Gerald (1870-1937), along with Laura, were part of the new household when Julia and Leslie married in 1878.

Julia and Leslie had four more children together, of which Virginia was the third. Vanessa (1879-1961) was her childhood companion and fellow editor of the family newsletter, *The Hyde Park Gate News*; the two remained close friends and sometimes rivals in adulthood, when Vanessa married Clive Bell, who was a friend of her brother Thoby, had three children, and worked as an artist. Thoby (1880-1906) was a popular and good-looking young man whose Cambridge friends formed the initial Bloomsbury Group of writers and artists, with which all the Stephen siblings were connected to some degree. Adrian (1883-1948) was his mother's favourite, but he clashed with his father and siblings, and became a psychoanalyst. The house at 22 Hyde Park Gate was full of children and energy, but also of sadness. Woolf wrote of being sexually molested by both her Duckworth half-brothers, which powerfully affected her. Laura was institutionalized in the 1890s as her disorders worsened. Julia Stephen suddenly died of influenza when Virginia was 13, "the worst disaster that could happen," as she put it, which led to her first mental breakdown. In his own grief, Leslie leaned heavily on the girls, causing immense resentment. Stella Duckworth took on most of the responsibility, but she married in 1897, to Leslie's distress. She died a few months after the wedding of peritonitis connected with pregnancy, another heavy blow to the family. Virginia's mental health remained very fragile, but she carried on studying, reading, and writing, while helping Vanessa with their father's demands.

When Leslie died of cancer in 1904, Virginia was saddened but liberated. With his death, she saw the Victorian past falling away. She suffered another nervous breakdown, which led to a suicide attempt, that year, but improved when she and her siblings left Hyde Park Gate and moved to unfashionable Bloomsbury to begin their own lives. Virginia enjoyed teaching adult courses at Morley College and working on her writing, as well as meeting with Thoby's friends, but Thoby died at 26 of typhoid after a European trip, and again the family was crushed. Virginia worked on her first novel, *The Voyage Out*, which describes a young woman's journey into South America and illness. In 1912, she agreed to marry Thoby's friend Leonard Woolf (1880-1969), a Jewish writer who worked for the Colonial Civil Service, in spite of her uncertainty about their compatibility. Leonard provided support when Virginia made another suicide attempt in 1913, and had another breakdown in 1915, when *The Voyage Out* was finally published. With him, she established the Hogarth Press, named after their London house, in 1917, which published works by both Leonard and Virginia, as well as by other contemporary writers. The happiness of the marriage has been debated, and Virginia had a long affair with the Hogarth writer Vita Sackville-West (1892-1962) beginning in 1923, but regardless, Virginia saw Leonard as one of her most important readers and supports. In different ways, they were both interested in new artistic forms and genres, and the changing political landscape.

Over the next decades, Woolf produced many acclaimed modernist works, in spite of further troubles with mental health, often drawing on her own past and continually pushing the boundaries of form and perspective. *Night and Day* (1919) describes young people trying to find their own way in the new 20th century; *Jacob's Room* (1922) memorializes Thoby and her family, as does *The Waves* (1931), with its fluid depiction of childhood's effects, and also *To the Lighthouse* (1927), a resurrection of her parents and early life. Her essays collected in *The Common Reader* volumes (1925 and 1932) cover a broad variety of subjects, and *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), set on a single day, depicts the way life attempts to carry on in spite of the shock of the World War I. An inventive biographer, Woolf wrote *Orlando: A*

Biography (1928), a love letter to Vita Sackville-West, to equality, and to androgyny; *Flush, A Biography* (1933), a playful tour de force about the Brownings' dog; and *Roger Fry: A Biography* (1940), which attempts truly to capture the life of her friend. *A Room of One's Own* (1929), like the later *Three Guineas* (1938), is a seminal feminist text. *The Years* (1934) cost her a great effort, again returning to Victorian childhood's effects on adulthood, and led to another depression. Fearing a German invasion of England, as well as another breakdown, she drowned herself in the River Ouse near her home in Sussex in 1941. She had completed her final novel, *Between the Acts*, the story of a historical pageant at a country house menaced by war. The end of the book has the central couple sitting alone in a kind of prehistoric dark, but finishes with the line, "They spoke." Even in darkness and apparent meaninglessness, Woolf's characters speak, and she is drawn to record them.

Media Attributions

153.

To the Lighthouse: Introduction

by Alix Hawley

Why read *To the Lighthouse*? What is it? A novel? A painting with words? A fairy tale? A feminist manifesto? An autobiography? A declaration of war? An "elegy," as Virginia Woolf put it?[1] If so, for what?

In a way, this book is without a plot. What story there is can be summarized quickly: Mr. Ramsay, a philosopher, and his wife, a famous beauty, both in middle age, are staying with their eight children and various guests at their summer holiday home in the Hebrides, islands off Scotland. Conflicts arise and fall in Part One, especially between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, but also within individual characters' minds. We see the shifting flow of thought and relationships from various points of view. The day culminates in a dinner in which union is triumphantly achieved, at least for a moment. In Part Two, things fall apart; time ravages the house, and we learn in passing that Mrs. Ramsay has shockingly died. Moreover, a daughter, Prue, has died in childbirth, and a son, Andrew, has been killed in First World War. Blackness and chaos lift at last as the housekeepers get to work on the dilapidated house and discuss the family's coming return. Part Three is a revisiting of Part One; now Mr. Ramsay is back at the holiday house with some of the remaining children and original guests, including the artist Lily Briscoe. Mrs. Ramsay's absence is enormous, as is the question of how to find union again, and the living characters struggle with both. In the end, a tenuous connection is made once more between the characters, and between past and present.

To the Lighthouse, then, is no racing page-turner. The important events tend to happen in the background: Mrs. Ramsay's death is the most obvious case. But the book carries readers onward with its rhythm and patterns. Of Woolf's books, it is probably the most accessible, and at the same time, the most innovative. It looks back, but is unlike anything before it. It is all of the genres listed above. Like a painting, it asks us to look closely at the author's technique to see how it has been made. Like a fairy tale, it manages to transform the everyday into something magical and extraordinary. Like a feminist manifesto, it exposes and challenges traditional gender roles. Like an autobiography, it recalls the intensity of childhood feelings. Like a declaration of war, it promises to fight the wrongs of the past. Like an elegy, it mourns the dead and lays them to rest so life can move on. The book's major achievement is the way it manages to make something new and permanent out of passing moments and feelings. As Woolf's artist character Lily Briscoe thinks of her painting, it must be like "a butterfly's wing," but "clamped together with bolts of iron."[2] *To the Lighthouse* does this in two ways: through its structure and its conflicts.

The story's structure is a reaction to Woolf's Victorian past. By the time she published *To the Lighthouse* in 1927, she had famously said, "On or about December 1910, human character changed."[3] This change, she said, was a response to the exhibition of Post-Impressionist painters like Cezanne and

1. The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 3 (27 June 1925). Ed. Anne Olivier Bell. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980. 34.
2. Woolf, To the Lighthouse. Project Gutenburg E-text 119.
3. Woolf, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown." 1923. The Collected Essays of Virginia Woolf. Vol. 1. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1967. 320.

Gauguin, whose deliberate abandonment of realistic representation caused outrage. Lily Briscoe in the book causes similar consternation in struggling to create her own vision, painting Mrs. Ramsay and her son as a purple shadow. Woolf too wanted to show that ways of seeing had changed as the Victorian and Edwardian eras came to an end, and her book's fresh shape reflects this. Many Victorian novels came in three parts, as does *To the Lighthouse*. But Woolf argued that many writers of the previous era could create a house, but not the people who lived here.[4] As a rebuttal, her construction is concerned with a house, and it itself built in the shape of a house—"two blocks joined by a corridor,"[5] as she planned Parts One and Three to connect via the brief Part Two—but it is a modernist house, where the corridor is only briefly lit, and where we cannot see exactly what is happening, only feel the impressions light sweeping past in the dark, like the lighthouse beam. When we reach Part Three, we cannot turn back. Though it is a block parallel to Part One, the changes here are obvious, the break is great. The book tells us that though we may recall the past, "[l]ife has changed completely."[6]

Life does not conform to literary conventions, Woolf seems to say, so how can a writer portray it in a novel? Her answer is to do away with convention altogether, or to turn it to new ends. In the book, Woolf similarly bends the events of her own life. She was born Adeline Virginia Stephen in 1882, a Victorian girl in a fairly conventional upper-middle class Victorian home. Like many modernist writers, she frequently argued with her past, using it as material while trying to shape something new of it, as does Lily Briscoe, trying to paint the dead Mrs. Ramsay in Part Three. The Ramsays were modelled on Woolf's family: her father, Sir Leslie Stephen, was a literary critic and editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography*; her mother, Julia Jackson Duckworth Stephen, was a famous beauty with artistic and literary family connections. Between them, they had eight children, with whom they spent happy summers at St. Ives in Cornwall, the model for the Ramsays' holiday house. However, Julia died suddenly when Woolf was 13—"the greatest disaster that could happen"[7]— followed by Woolf's half-sister Stella, shortly after marriage, in 1897. Her father died in 1904 of cancer, and her brother Thoby was struck down by typhoid fever in 1906. Death had an enormous impact on Woolf's mental health and her writing. The First World War only exacerbated its power, and made her seek new forms more urgently, as neat plots seemed of no use after such destruction. At the same time, she wrote the book to lay the ghosts of her parents to rest,[8] and with them, the Victorian past. Attempts to find order in the face of shocking chaos come into her work frequently, as we see with the characters seeking connection and memorable moments throughout *To the Lighthouse*. Like her Bloomsbury Group friends, a loose gathering of artists and writers in London, she saw the purpose of art as a search for true, even wordless, communication, which could produce a permanence lacking in life. Trying "to make of the moment something permanent," as Lily and Mrs. Ramsay do,[9] is all one can do.

Woolf's style is part of her structural innovation. Her sentences are poetic and fluid, and the text is full of juxtapositions and sudden shifts; for instance, Mrs. Ramsay loves her husband one minute, is filled with irritation for him the next, and then admires him again. Like other modernists, Woolf is concerned with representing the way the mind works, in all its changing impressions and rhythms. In her 1919 essay "Modern Fiction," she writes:

> Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad of impressions—trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From

4. Ibid.
5. To the Lighthouse: The Original Holograph Draft. Transcribed and edited by Susan Dick. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1982. 48.
6. Woolf, To the Lighthouse. Project Gutenberg e-text 121.
7. Woolf, "A Sketch of the Past." Moments of Being. Ed. Joanne Schulkind. 2nd ed. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985. 40.
8. Woolf, "A Sketch of the Past." Moments of Being. Ed. Joanne Schulkind. 2nd ed. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich,1985. 81. See also The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 3. Ed. Anne Olivier Bell. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980. 208.
9. Woolf, To the Lighthouse. Project Gutenberg e-text 112.

> all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old, the moment of importance came not here but there. . . . Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display . . ..[10]

If we recognize that Woolf is interested in inner states rather than external events, the simplicity of the plot ceases to matter, and the book takes on new depth. Moreover, if we recognize the quick shifts in points of view—in the first two pages, we move between the minds of Mrs. Ramsay, James, and Mr. Ramsay—we see that Woolf is trying to link multiple perspectives. Many of the characters are lonely or isolated in some way; Lily Briscoe and Charles Tansley are the clearest examples among the guests, but Mr. Ramsay is also alone and fighting to be understood. Woolf's movements in point of view blend these individual characters' minds into a kind of community, creating the moments of connection they are all seeking in their attempts to fight chaos.

The fight against disunity is just one of the book's conflicts. The past versus the present, older versus younger generations, the married versus the single, art versus science—all are "opposite forces" that must find "that razor edge of balance," as Lily thinks of it.[11] Perhaps the major opposition is between male and female. Woolf is well known as an early feminist who felt that because of her sex, she had been unfairly denied a formal education, though she read widely on her own.[12] As she planned the book, she imagined her father at the centre of it, hoping to come to terms with his effect on her. Leslie Stephen fell into despair after Julia's death, demanding care and attention from his daughters and stepdaughter. Woolf later wrote that if he had lived longer, "His life would have entirely ended mine. What would have happened? No writing, no books—inconceivable."[13] The character of Mr. Ramsay is fatally "sterile,"[14] always claiming sympathy from the women and girls. His answer to the book's major question, "What is the meaning of life?,"[15] is an uncompromising search for the truth, even to the point of hurting his children.[16] Woolf also wanted to represent her mother; the book was published on the thirty-second anniversary of her death, and Woolf had been looking at Victorian photographs of her before she began to write. Like Julia Stephen, Mrs. Ramsay's female answer to life, in contrast to her husband's, is to unite everyone, especially in marriage. The book's male characters make various disparaging remarks about women; Charles Tansley, for instance, appears in Lily's mind saying, "Women can't paint, women can't write."[17] Though Woolf implicates men as oppressive figures, she also represents the benefits and failings of all traditionally gendered approaches to life. Mr. Ramsay is stark, but brave in his pursuit of understanding, and Mrs. Ramsay is loving, but short-sighted and controlling. Lily Briscoe's solution to life's question, in an apparent echo of Woolf's own view, is a combination of both male and female ideas, or an androgynous one. She learns not to shut herself and her ideas away, in spite of male criticism, and shares her painting, her personal "vision" of truth, with others, including Mr. Ramsay. Her art, like the book, is a unifying force, a source of order and permanence. When Lily lays down her brush and says, in the end, "I have had my vision,"[18] we notice the verb tense. The vision is already finished. But it has existed, and that is enough.

10. Woolf, "Modern Fiction." The Common Reader: First Series. 1925. London: Hogarth, 1975. 154.
11. Woolf, To the Lighthouse. Project Gutenberg e-text 134.
12. See her essays "A Room of One's Own" and "Professions for Women," for example.
13. Woolf, The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 3. Ed. Anne Olivier Bell. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980. 208.
14. Woolf, To the Lighthouse. Project Gutenberg e-text 26.
15. Ibid. 112.
16. Ibid. 2.
17. Ibid. 34 and 137.
18. Ibid. 145.

154.

To the Lighthouse

Virginia Woolf

To the Lighthouse is also available as a [PDF Document].

THE WINDOW
1

"Yes, of course, if it's fine tomorrow," said Mrs. Ramsay. "But you'll have to be up with the lark," she added.

To her son these words conveyed an extraordinary joy, as if it were settled, the expedition were bound to take place, and the wonder to which he had looked forward, for years and years it seemed, was, after a night's darkness and a day's sail, within touch. Since he belonged, even at the age of six, to that great clan which cannot keep this feeling separate from that, but must let future prospects, with their joys and sorrows, cloud what is actually at hand, since to such people even in earliest childhood any turn in the wheel of sensation has the power to crystallise and transfix the moment upon which its gloom or radiance rests, James Ramsay, sitting on the floor cutting out pictures from the illustrated catalogue of the Army and Navy stores,[1] endowed the picture of a refrigerator, as his mother spoke, with heavenly bliss. It was fringed with joy. The wheelbarrow, the lawnmower, the sound of poplar trees, leaves whitening before rain, rooks cawing, brooms knocking, dresses rustling–all these were so coloured and distinguished in his mind that he had already his private code, his secret language, though he appeared the image of stark and uncompromising severity, with his high forehead and his fierce blue eyes, impeccably candid and pure, frowning slightly at the sight of human frailty, so that his mother, watching him guide his scissors neatly round the refrigerator, imagined him all red and ermine on the Bench or directing a stern and momentous enterprise in some crisis of public affairs.[2]

1. Large department store chain whose flagship shop was on Victoria Street in London, where the Ramsays live when they are not at the holiday house here.
2. James is partly based on Woolf's younger brother Adrian Stephen (1883-1948), her mother's favourite. He seems to have had a difficult time in childhood, feeling inferior to his bright and popular brother Thoby, and clashed with his father. As children, Woolf and her

"But," said his father, stopping in front of the drawing-room window, "it won't be fine."

Had there been an axe handy, a poker, or any weapon that would have gashed a hole in his father's breast and killed him, there and then, James would have seized it. Such were the extremes of emotion that Mr. Ramsay excited in his children's breasts by his mere presence; standing, as now, lean as a knife, narrow as the blade of one, grinning sarcastically, not only with the pleasure of disillusioning his son and casting ridicule upon his wife, who was ten thousand times better in every way than he was (James thought), but also with some secret conceit at his own accuracy of judgement. What he said was true. It was always true. He was incapable of untruth; never tampered with a fact; never altered a disagreeable word to suit the pleasure or convenience of any mortal being, least of all of his own children, who, sprung from his loins, should be aware from childhood that life is difficult; facts uncompromising; and the passage to that fabled land where our brightest hopes are extinguished, our frail barks founder in darkness (here Mr. Ramsay would straighten his back and narrow his little blue eyes upon the horizon), one that needs, above all, courage, truth, and the power to endure.

"But it may be fine–I expect it will be fine," said Mrs. Ramsay, making some little twist of the reddish brown stocking she was knitting, impatiently. If she finished it tonight, if they did go to the Lighthouse after all, it was to be given to the Lighthouse keeper for his little boy, who was threatened with a tuberculous hip; together with a pile of old magazines, and some tobacco, indeed, whatever she could find lying about, not really wanted, but only littering the room, to give those poor fellows, who must be bored to death sitting all day with nothing to do but polish the lamp and trim the wick and rake about on their scrap of garden, something to amuse them. For how would you like to be shut up for a whole month at a time, and possibly more in stormy weather, upon a rock the size of a tennis lawn? she would ask; and to have no letters or newspapers, and to see nobody; if you were married, not to see your wife, not to know how your children were,–if they were ill, if they had fallen down and broken their legs or arms; to see the same dreary waves breaking week after week, and then a dreadful storm coming, and the windows covered with spray, and birds dashed against the lamp, and the whole place rocking, and not be able to put your nose out of doors for fear of being swept into the sea? How would you like that? she asked, addressing herself particularly to her daughters. So she added, rather differently, one must take them whatever comforts one can.

sister wrote in the Hyde Park Gate News, the family newsletter, that nine-year-old Adrian was "much disappointed at not being allowed to go" on a trip to Godrevy Lighthouse off the coast of their summer home in Cornwall (British Library MS, 12 September, 1892).

"It's due west," said the atheist Tansley, holding his bony fingers spread so that the wind blew through them, for he was sharing Mr. Ramsay's evening walk up and down, up and down the terrace. That is to say, the wind blew from the worst possible direction for landing at the Lighthouse. Yes, he did say disagreeable things, Mrs. Ramsay admitted; it was odious of him to rub this in, and make James still more disappointed; but at the same time, she would not let them laugh at him. "The atheist," they called him; "the little atheist." Rose mocked him; Prue mocked him; Andrew, Jasper, Roger mocked him; even old Badger without a tooth in his head had bit him, for being (as Nancy put it) the hundred and tenth young man to chase them all the way up to the Hebrides when it was ever so much nicer to be alone.

"Nonsense," said Mrs. Ramsay, with great severity. Apart from the habit of exaggeration which they had from her, and from the implication (which was true) that she asked too many people to stay, and had to lodge some in the town, she could not bear incivility to her guests, to young men in particular, who were poor as churchmice, "exceptionally able," her husband said, his great admirers, and come there for a holiday. Indeed, she had the whole of the other sex under her protection; for reasons she could not explain, for their chivalry and valour, for the fact that they negotiated treaties, ruled India,[3] controlled finance; finally for an attitude towards herself which no woman could fail to feel or to find agreeable, something trustful, childlike, reverential; which an old woman could take from a young man without loss of dignity, and woe betide the girl–pray Heaven it was none of her daughters!–who did not feel the worth of it, and all that it implied, to the marrow of her bones!

She turned with severity upon Nancy. He had not chased them, she said. He had been asked.

They must find a way out of it all. There might be some simpler way, some less laborious way, she sighed. When she looked in the glass and saw her hair grey, her cheek sunk, at fifty, she thought, possibly she might have managed things better–her husband; money; his books. But for her own part she would never for a single second regret her decision, evade difficulties, or slur over duties. She was now formidable to behold, and it was only in silence, looking up from their plates, after she had spoken so severely about Charles Tansley, that her daughters, Prue, Nancy, Rose–could sport with infidel ideas which they had brewed for themselves of a life different from hers; in Paris, perhaps; a wilder life; not always taking care of some man or other; for there was in all their minds a mute questioning of deference and chivalry, of the Bank of England and the Indian Empire, of ringed fingers and lace, though to them all there was something in this of the essence of beauty, which called out the

3. A reference to British rule over India at the time.

manliness in their girlish hearts, and made them, as they sat at table beneath their mother's eyes, honour her strange severity, her extreme courtesy, like a queen's raising from the mud to wash a beggar's dirty foot, when she admonished them so very severely about that wretched atheist who had chased them–or, speaking accurately, been invited to stay with them–in the Isle of Skye.[4]

"There'll be no landing at the Lighthouse tomorrow," said Charles Tansley, clapping his hands together as he stood at the window with her husband. Surely, he had said enough. She wished they would both leave her and James alone and go on talking. She looked at him. He was such a miserable specimen, the children said, all humps and hollows. He couldn't play cricket; he poked; he shuffled. He was a sarcastic brute, Andrew said. They knew what he liked best–to be for ever walking up and down, up and down, with Mr. Ramsay, and saying who had won this, who had won that, who was a "first rate man" at Latin verses, who was "brilliant but I think fundamentally unsound," who was undoubtedly the "ablest fellow in Balliol,"[5] who had buried his light temporarily at Bristol or Bedford,[6] but was bound to be heard of later when his Prolegomena[7], of which Mr. Tansley had the first pages in proof with him if Mr. Ramsay would like to see them, to some branch of mathematics or philosophy saw the light of day. That was what they talked about.

She could not help laughing herself sometimes. She said, the other day, something about "waves mountains high." Yes, said Charles Tansley, it was a little rough. "Aren't you drenched to the skin?" she had said. "Damp, not wet through," said Mr. Tansley, pinching his sleeve, feeling his socks.

But it was not that they minded, the children said. It was not his face; it was not his manners. It was him–his point of view. When they talked about something interesting, people, music, history, anything, even said it was a fine evening so why not sit out of doors, then what they complained of about Charles Tansley was that until he had turned the whole thing round and made it somehow reflect himself and disparage them–he was not satisfied. And he would go to picture galleries they said, and he would ask one, did one like his tie? God knows, said Rose, one did not.

Disappearing as stealthily as stags from the dinner-table directly the meal was over, the eight sons and daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay sought their bedrooms, their fastness in a house where there was no other privacy to debate anything, everything; Tansley's tie; the passing of the Reform

4. One of the Hebrides islands off Scotland, where the novel is set.
5. A college of Oxford University.
6. Universities the Ramsays consider inferior.
7. A critical introduction to a book.

Bill;[8] sea birds and butterflies; people; while the sun poured into those attics, which a plank alone separated from each other so that every footstep could be plainly heard and the Swiss girl sobbing for her father who was dying of cancer in a valley of the Grisons,[9] and lit up bats, flannels, straw hats, ink-pots, paint-pots, beetles, and the skulls of small birds, while it drew from the long frilled strips of seaweed pinned to the wall a smell of salt and weeds, which was in the towels too, gritty with sand from bathing.

Strife, divisions, difference of opinion, prejudices twisted into the very fibre of being, oh, that they should begin so early, Mrs. Ramsay deplored. They were so critical, her children. They talked such nonsense. She went from the dining-room, holding James by the hand, since he would not go with the others. It seemed to her such nonsense–inventing differences, when people, heaven knows, were different enough without that. The real differences, she thought, standing by the drawing-room window, are enough, quite enough. She had in mind at the moment, rich and poor, high and low; the great in birth receiving from her, half grudging, some respect, for had she not in her veins the blood of that very noble, if slightly mythical, Italian house, whose daughters, scattered about English drawing-rooms in the nineteenth century, had lisped so charmingly, had stormed so wildly, and all her wit and her bearing and her temper came from them, and not from the sluggish English, or the cold Scotch[10]; but more profoundly, she ruminated the other problem, of rich and poor, and the things she saw with her own eyes, weekly, daily, here or in London, when she visited this widow, or that struggling wife in person with a bag on her arm, and a note-book and pencil with which she wrote down in columns carefully ruled for the purpose wages and spendings, employment and unemployment, in the hope that thus she would cease to be a private woman whose charity was half a sop to her own indignation, half a relief to her own curiosity, and become what with her untrained mind she greatly admired, an investigator, elucidating the social problem.[11]

Insoluble questions they were, it seemed to her, standing there, holding James by the hand. He had followed her into the drawing-room, that young man they laughed at; he was standing by the table, fidgeting with something, awkwardly, feeling himself out of things, as she knew without looking round. They had all gone–the children; Minta Doyle and Paul Rayley; Augustus Carmichael; her husband–they had all gone. So she turned with a sigh and said, "Would it bore you to come with me, Mr. Tansley?"

8. The most recent Reform Bill was passed in 1884, and gave the vote to most adult males in Britain. Other voting reforms had been passed in 1832 and 1867.
9. A canton (district) in Switzerland.
10. Julia Stephen's mother Maria was one of the seven Pattle sisters, who had noble French ancestry and were notable for their beauty or talent. The famous Victorian photographer Julia Margaret Cameron was one also.
11. Julia Stephen spent much energy visiting the poor and caring for the sick, like many middle-class Victorian women.

She had a dull errand in the town; she had a letter or two to write; she would be ten minutes perhaps; she would put on her hat. And, with her basket and her parasol, there she was again, ten minutes later, giving out a sense of being ready, of being equipped for a jaunt, which, however, she must interrupt for a moment, as they passed the tennis lawn, to ask Mr. Carmichael, who was basking with his yellow cat's eyes ajar, so that like a cat's they seemed to reflect the branches moving or the clouds passing, but to give no inkling of any inner thoughts or emotion whatsoever, if he wanted anything.

For they were making the great expedition, she said, laughing. They were going to the town. "Stamps, writing-paper, tobacco?" she suggested, stopping by his side. But no, he wanted nothing. His hands clasped themselves over his capacious paunch, his eyes blinked, as if he would have liked to reply kindly to these blandishments (she was seductive but a little nervous) but could not, sunk as he was in a grey-green somnolence which embraced them all, without need of words, in a vast and benevolent lethargy of well-wishing; all the house; all the world; all the people in it, for he had slipped into his glass at lunch a few drops of something, which accounted, the children thought, for the vivid streak of canary-yellow in moustache and beard that were otherwise milk white. No, nothing, he murmured.

He should have been a great philosopher, said Mrs. Ramsay, as they went down the road to the fishing village, but he had made an unfortunate marriage. Holding her black parasol very erect, and moving with an indescribable air of expectation, as if she were going to meet some one round the corner, she told the story; an affair at Oxford with some girl; an early marriage; poverty; going to India; translating a little poetry "very beautifully, I believe," being willing to teach the boys Persian or Hindustanee,[12] but what really was the use of that?–and then lying, as they saw him, on the lawn.

It flattered him; snubbed as he had been, it soothed him that Mrs. Ramsay should tell him this. Charles Tansley revived. Insinuating, too, as she did the greatness of man's intellect, even in its decay, the subjection of all wives–not that she blamed the girl, and the marriage had been happy enough, she believed–to their husband's labours, she made him feel better pleased with himself than he had done yet, and he would have liked, had they taken a cab, for example, to have paid the fare. As for her little bag, might he not carry that? No, no, she said, she always carried *that* herself. She did too. Yes, he felt that in her. He felt many things, something in particular that excited him and disturbed him for reasons which he could not give. He would like her to see him, gowned and hooded,

12. An old spelling for Hindustani, one of the major languages of India.

walking in a procession. A fellowship, a professorship, he felt capable of anything and saw himself–but what was she looking at? At a man pasting a bill. The vast flapping sheet flattened itself out, and each shove of the brush revealed fresh legs, hoops, horses, glistening reds and blues, beautifully smooth, until half the wall was covered with the advertisement of a circus; a hundred horsemen, twenty performing seals, lions, tigers … Craning forwards, for she was short-sighted, she read it out … "will visit this town," she read. It was terribly dangerous work for a one-armed man, she exclaimed, to stand on top of a ladder like that–his left arm had been cut off in a reaping machine two years ago.

"Let us all go!" she cried, moving on, as if all those riders and horses had filled her with childlike exultation and made her forget her pity.

"Let's go," he said, repeating her words, clicking them out, however, with a self-consciousness that made her wince. "Let us all go to the circus." No. He could not say it right. He could not feel it right. But why not? she wondered. What was wrong with him then? She liked him warmly, at the moment. Had they not been taken, she asked, to circuses when they were children? Never, he answered, as if she asked the very thing he wanted; had been longing all these days to say, how they did not go to circuses. It was a large family, nine brothers and sisters, and his father was a working man. "My father is a chemist, Mrs. Ramsay. He keeps a shop." He himself had paid his own way since he was thirteen. Often he went without a greatcoat in winter. He could never "return hospitality" (those were his parched stiff words) at college. He had to make things last twice the time other people did; he smoked the cheapest tobacco; shag[13]; the same the old men did in the quays. He worked hard–seven hours a day; his subject was now the influence of something upon somebody–they were walking on and Mrs. Ramsay did not quite catch the meaning, only the words, here and there … dissertation … fellowship … readership … lectureship.[14] She could not follow the ugly academic jargon, that rattled itself off so glibly, but said to herself that she saw now why going to the circus had knocked him off his perch, poor little man, and why he came out, instantly, with all that about his father and mother and brothers and sisters, and she would see to it that they didn't laugh at him any more; she would tell Prue about it. What he would have liked, she supposed, would have been to say how he had gone not to the circus but to Ibsen[15] with the Ramsays. He was an awful prig–oh yes, an insufferable bore. For, though they had reached the town now and were in the main street, with carts grinding past on the cobbles, still he went on talking, about settlements, and teaching, and working men, and helping our own class, and lectures, till she gathered that he had got back entire

13. Shag tobacco is loose and has to be rolled by hand in papers, hence its cheapness.
14. Fellowship, readership, and lectureship are academic ranks in Britain.
15. Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), the Norwegian playwright whose works, such as "A Doll's House," were revolutionary, realistic representations of modern life.

self-confidence, had recovered from the circus, and was about (and now again she liked him warmly) to tell her–but here, the houses falling away on both sides, they came out on the quay, and the whole bay spread before them and Mrs. Ramsay could not help exclaiming, “Oh, how beautiful!” For the great plateful of blue water was before her; the hoary Lighthouse, distant, austere, in the midst; and on the right, as far as the eye could see, fading and falling, in soft low pleats, the green sand dunes with the wild flowing grasses on them, which always seemed to be running away into some moon country, uninhabited of men.

That was the view, she said, stopping, growing greyer-eyed, that her husband loved.

She paused a moment. But now, she said, artists had come here. There indeed, only a few paces off, stood one of them, in Panama hat and yellow boots, seriously, softly, absorbedly, for all that he was watched by ten little boys, with an air of profound contentment on his round red face gazing, and then, when he had gazed, dipping; imbuing the tip of his brush in some soft mound of green or pink. Since Mr. Paunceforte[16] had been there, three years before, all the pictures were like that, she said, green and grey, with lemon-coloured sailing-boats, and pink women on the beach.

But her grandmother’s friends, she said, glancing discreetly as they passed, took the greatest pains; first they mixed their own colours, and then they ground them, and then they put damp cloths to keep them moist.

So Mr. Tansley supposed she meant him to see that that man’s picture was skimpy, was that what one said? The colours weren’t solid? Was that what one said? Under the influence of that extraordinary emotion which had been growing all the walk, had begun in the garden when he had wanted to take her bag, had increased in the town when he had wanted to tell her everything about himself, he was coming to see himself, and everything he had ever known gone crooked a little. It was awfully strange.

There he stood in the parlour of the poky little house where she had taken him, waiting for her, while she went upstairs a moment to see a woman. He heard her quick step above; heard her voice cheerful, then low; looked at the mats, tea-caddies, glass shades; waited quite impatiently; looked forward eagerly to the walk home; determined to carry her bag; then heard her come out; shut a door; say they must keep the windows open and the doors shut, ask at the house for anything they wanted (she must be talking to a child) when, suddenly, in she came, stood for a moment silent (as if

16. Mr. Paunceforte is an invented artist who represents actual painters of the late-Victorian period, such as Whistler and Sickert. These artists worked at St. Ives, where Woolf’s childhood holiday home was, often painting beach and sea scenes in pale colours. Mrs. Ramsay speaks in the next paragraph of “her grandmother’s friends,” showing her preference for the art of the past, which she generally represents.

she had been pretending up there, and for a moment let herself be now), stood quite motionless for a moment against a picture of Queen Victoria wearing the blue ribbon of the Garter[17]; when all at once he realised that it was this: it was this:–she was the most beautiful person he had ever seen.

With stars in her eyes and veils in her hair, with cyclamen[18] and wild violets–what nonsense was he thinking? She was fifty at least; she had eight children. Stepping through fields of flowers and taking to her breast buds that had broken and lambs that had fallen; with the stars in her eyes and the wind in her hair[19]–He had hold of her bag.

"Good-bye, Elsie," she said, and they walked up the street, she holding her parasol erect and walking as if she expected to meet some one round the corner, while for the first time in his life Charles Tansley felt an extraordinary pride; a man digging in a drain stopped digging and looked at her, let his arm fall down and looked at her; for the first time in his life Charles Tansley felt an extraordinary pride; felt the wind and the cyclamen and the violets for he was walking with a beautiful woman. He had hold of her bag.

2

"No going to the Lighthouse, James," he said, as trying in deference to Mrs. Ramsay to soften his voice into some semblance of geniality at least.

Odious little man, thought Mrs. Ramsay, why go on saying that?

3

"Perhaps you will wake up and find the sun shining and the birds singing," she said compassionately, smoothing the little boy's hair, for her husband, with his caustic saying that it would not be fine, had dashed his spirits she could see. This going to the Lighthouse was a passion of his, she saw, and then, as if her husband had not said enough, with his caustic saying that it would not be fine tomorrow, this odious little man went and rubbed it in all over again.

"Perhaps it will be fine tomorrow," she said, smoothing his hair.

17. The Order of the Garter, the highest royal honour in Britain, whose members wear a blue ribbon.
18. A flowering plant, an ancient symbol of love.
19. Many critics have commented on Mrs. Ramsay's symbolic connection to Demeter, the goddess of the harvest. Tansley seems to see her this way here.

All she could do now was to admire the refrigerator, and turn the pages of the Stores list in the hope that she might come upon something like a rake, or a mowing-machine, which, with its prongs and its handles, would need the greatest skill and care in cutting out. All these young men parodied her husband, she reflected; he said it would rain; they said it would be a positive tornado.

But here, as she turned the page, suddenly her search for the picture of a rake or a mowing-machine was interrupted. The gruff murmur, irregularly broken by the taking out of pipes and the putting in of pipes which had kept on assuring her, though she could not hear what was said (as she sat in the window which opened on the terrace), that the men were happily talking; this sound, which had lasted now half an hour and had taken its place soothingly in the scale of sounds pressing on top of her, such as the tap of balls upon bats, the sharp, sudden bark now and then, "How's that? How's that?"[20] of the children playing cricket, had ceased; so that the monotonous fall of the waves on the beach, which for the most part beat a measured and soothing tattoo to her thoughts and seemed consolingly to repeat over and over again as she sat with the children the words of some old cradle song, murmured by nature, "I am guarding you–I am your support," but at other times suddenly and unexpectedly, especially when her mind raised itself slightly from the task actually in hand, had no such kindly meaning, but like a ghostly roll of drums remorselessly beat the measure of life, made one think of the destruction of the island and its engulfment in the sea, and warned her whose day had slipped past in one quick doing after another that it was all ephemeral as a rainbow–this sound which had been obscured and concealed under the other sounds suddenly thundered hollow in her ears and made her look up with an impulse of terror.

They had ceased to talk; that was the explanation. Falling in one second from the tension which had gripped her to the other extreme which, as if to recoup her for her unnecessary expense of emotion, was cool, amused, and even faintly malicious, she concluded that poor Charles Tansley had been shed. That was of little account to her. If her husband required sacrifices (and indeed he did) she cheerfully offered up to him Charles Tansley, who had snubbed her little boy.

One moment more, with her head raised, she listened, as if she waited for some habitual sound, some regular mechanical sound; and then, hearing something rhythmical, half said, half chanted, beginning in the garden, as her husband beat up and down the terrace, something between a croak and a song, she was soothed once more, assured again that all was well, and looking down at the book on her knee found the picture of a pocket knife

20. An appeal to the umpire in cricket. Woolf and her siblings loved playing the game as children.

with six blades which could only be cut out if James was very careful.

Suddenly a loud cry, as of a sleep-walker, half roused, something about

Stormed at with shot and shell[21]

sung out with the utmost intensity in her ear, made her turn apprehensively to see if anyone had heard him. Only Lily Briscoe, she was glad to find; and that did not matter. But the sight of the girl standing on the edge of the lawn painting reminded her; she was supposed to be keeping her head as much in the same position as possible for Lily's picture. Lily's picture! Mrs. Ramsay smiled. With her little Chinese eyes[22] and her puckered-up face, she would never marry; one could not take her painting very seriously; she was an independent little creature, and Mrs. Ramsay liked her for it; so, remembering her promise, she bent her head.

4

Indeed, he almost knocked her easel over, coming down upon her with his hands waving shouting out, "Boldly we rode and well,"[23] but, mercifully, he turned sharp, and rode off, to die gloriously she supposed upon the heights of Balaclava. Never was anybody at once so ridiculous and so alarming. But so long as he kept like that, waving, shouting, she was safe; he would not stand still and look at her picture. And that was what Lily Briscoe could not have endured. Even while she looked at the mass, at the line, at the colour, at Mrs. Ramsay sitting in the window with James, she kept a feeler on her surroundings lest some one should creep up, and suddenly she should find her picture looked at. But now, with all her senses quickened as they were, looking, straining, till the colour of the wall and the jacmanna[24] beyond burnt into her eyes, she was aware of someone coming out of the house, coming towards her; but somehow divined, from the footfall, William Bankes, so that though her brush quivered, she did not, as she would have done had it been Mr. Tansley, Paul Rayley, Minta Doyle, or practically anybody else, turn her canvas upon the grass, but let it stand. William Bankes stood beside her.

21. A quotation from Tennyson's famous Victorian poem, "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (1854) which depicted a disastrous attack during the Crimean War in which almost a third of the British were killed or wounded. Mr. Ramsay tends to feel himself a similar brave and doomed hero.

22. Some critics have pointed out the casual racism of Mrs. Ramsay's comment as a reference to a British sense of superiority over others during the period of the Empire.

23. Another quotation from Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade"; see note 21.

24. A colourful climbing plant.

They had rooms in the village, and so, walking in, walking out, parting late on door-mats, had said little things about the soup, about the children, about one thing and another which made them allies; so that when he stood beside her now in his judicial way (he was old enough to be her father too, a botanist, a widower, smelling of soap, very scrupulous and clean) she just stood there. He just stood there. Her shoes were excellent, he observed. They allowed the toes their natural expansion. Lodging in the same house with her, he had noticed too, how orderly she was, up before breakfast and off to paint, he believed, alone: poor, presumably, and without the complexion or the allurement of Miss Doyle certainly, but with a good sense which made her in his eyes superior to that young lady. Now, for instance, when Ramsay bore down on them, shouting, gesticulating, Miss Briscoe, he felt certain, understood.

Some one had blundered.[25]

Mr. Ramsay glared at them. He glared at them without seeming to see them. That did make them both vaguely uncomfortable. Together they had seen a thing they had not been meant to see. They had encroached upon a privacy. So, Lily thought, it was probably an excuse of his for moving, for getting out of earshot, that made Mr. Bankes almost immediately say something about its being chilly and suggested taking a stroll. She would come, yes. But it was with difficulty that she took her eyes off her picture.

The jacmanna was bright violet; the wall staring white. She would not have considered it honest to tamper with the bright violet and the staring white, since she saw them like that, fashionable though it was, since Mr. Paunceforte's visit, to see everything pale, elegant, semitransparent.[26] Then beneath the colour there was the shape. She could see it all so clearly, so commandingly, when she looked: it was when she took her brush in hand that the whole thing changed. It was in that moment's flight between the picture and her canvas that the demons set on her who often brought her to the verge of tears and made this passage from conception to work as dreadful as any down a dark passage for a child. Such she often felt herself–struggling against terrific odds to maintain her courage; to say: "But this is what I see; this is what I see," and so to clasp some miserable remnant of her vision to her breast, which a thousand forces did their best to pluck from her. And it was then too, in that chill and windy way, as she began to paint, that there forced themselves upon her other things, her own inadequacy, her insignificance, keeping house for

25. Tennyson; see note 21.
26. See note 16 on Paunceforte and art.

her father off the Brompton Road,[27] and had much ado to control her impulse to fling herself (thank Heaven she had always resisted so far) at Mrs. Ramsay's knee and say to her–but what could one say to her? "I'm in love with you?" No, that was not true. "I'm in love with this all," waving her hand at the hedge, at the house, at the children. It was absurd, it was impossible. So now she laid her brushes neatly in the box, side by side, and said to William Bankes:

"It suddenly gets cold. The sun seems to give less heat," she said, looking about her, for it was bright enough, the grass still a soft deep green, the house starred in its greenery with purple passion flowers, and rooks dropping cool cries from the high blue. But something moved, flashed, turned a silver wing in the air. It was September after all, the middle of September, and past six in the evening. So off they strolled down the garden in the usual direction, past the tennis lawn, past the pampas grass, to that break in the thick hedge, guarded by red hot pokers[28] like brasiers of clear burning coal, between which the blue waters of the bay looked bluer than ever.

They came there regularly every evening drawn by some need. It was as if the water floated off and set sailing thoughts which had grown stagnant on dry land, and gave to their bodies even some sort of physical relief. First, the pulse of colour flooded the bay with blue, and the heart expanded with it and the body swam, only the next instant to be checked and chilled by the prickly blackness on the ruffled waves. Then, up behind the great black rock, almost every evening spurted irregularly, so that one had to watch for it and it was a delight when it came, a fountain of white water; and then, while one waited for that, one watched, on the pale semicircular beach, wave after wave shedding again and again smoothly, a film of mother of pearl.

They both smiled, standing there. They both felt a common hilarity, excited by the moving waves; and then by the swift cutting race of a sailing boat, which, having sliced a curve in the bay, stopped; shivered; let its sails drop down; and then, with a natural instinct to complete the picture, after this swift movement, both of them looked at the dunes far away, and instead of merriment felt come over them some sadness–because the thing was completed partly, and partly because distant views seem to outlast by a million years (Lily thought) the gazer and to be communing already with a sky which beholds an earth entirely at rest.

Looking at the far sand hills, William Bankes thought of Ramsay: thought of a road in Westmorland, thought of Ramsay striding along a road by

27. A somewhat unfashionable area in London. Charles Dickens Jr. noted in 1879 that the Brompton Road was favoured by artists, and was the site of a tuberculosis hospital. See http://www.victorianlondon.org/districts/brompton.htm.
28. Bright, tall, red and orange flowers.

himself hung round with that solitude which seemed to be his natural air. But this was suddenly interrupted, William Bankes remembered (and this must refer to some actual incident), by a hen, straddling her wings out in protection of a covey of little chicks, upon which Ramsay, stopping, pointed his stick and said "Pretty–pretty," an odd illumination in to his heart, Bankes had thought it, which showed his simplicity, his sympathy with humble things; but it seemed to him as if their friendship had ceased, there, on that stretch of road. After that, Ramsay had married. After that, what with one thing and another, the pulp had gone out of their friendship. Whose fault it was he could not say, only, after a time, repetition had taken the place of newness. It was to repeat that they met. But in this dumb colloquy with the sand dunes he maintained that his affection for Ramsay had in no way diminished; but there, like the body of a young man laid up in peat for a century, with the red fresh on his lips, was his friendship, in its acuteness and reality, laid up across the bay among the sandhills.

He was anxious for the sake of this friendship and perhaps too in order to clear himself in his own mind from the imputation of having dried and shrunk–for Ramsay lived in a welter of children, whereas Bankes was childless and a widower–he was anxious that Lily Briscoe should not disparage Ramsay (a great man in his own way) yet should understand how things stood between them. Begun long years ago, their friendship had petered out on a Westmorland[29] road, where the hen spread her wings before her chicks; after which Ramsay had married, and their paths lying different ways, there had been, certainly for no one's fault, some tendency, when they met, to repeat.

Yes. That was it. He finished. He turned from the view. And, turning to walk back the other way, up the drive, Mr. Bankes was alive to things which would not have struck him had not those sandhills revealed to him the body of his friendship lying with the red on its lips laid up in peat–for instance, Cam, the little girl, Ramsay's youngest daughter. She was picking Sweet Alice[30] on the bank. She was wild and fierce. She would not "give a flower to the gentleman" as the nursemaid told her. No! no! no! she would not! She clenched her fist. She stamped. And Mr. Bankes felt aged and saddened and somehow put into the wrong by her about his friendship. He must have dried and shrunk.

The Ramsays were not rich, and it was a wonder how they managed to contrive it all. Eight children! To feed eight children on philosophy! Here was another of them, Jasper this time, strolling past, to have a shot at a bird, he said, nonchalantly, swinging Lily's hand like a pump-handle

29. A county in north-west England, now part of Cumbria, popular for walking and hiking. Leslie Stephen, Woolf's father, was a renowned walker.

30. A flowering plant, and perhaps a reference to the conflict between childhood and adulthood, which is also strong in Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865), well known to Woolf.

as he passed, which caused Mr. Bankes to say, bitterly, how *she* was a favourite. There was education now to be considered (true, Mrs. Ramsay had something of her own perhaps) let alone the daily wear and tear of shoes and stockings which those "great fellows," all well grown, angular, ruthless youngsters, must require. As for being sure which was which, or in what order they came, that was beyond him. He called them privately after the Kings and Queens of England; Cam the Wicked, James the Ruthless, Andrew the Just, Prue the Fair–for Prue would have beauty, he thought, how could she help it?–and Andrew brains.[31] While he walked up the drive and Lily Briscoe said yes and no and capped his comments (for she was in love with them all, in love with this world) he weighed Ramsay's case, commiserated him, envied him, as if he had seen him divest himself of all those glories of isolation and austerity which crowned him in youth to cumber himself definitely with fluttering wings and clucking domesticities. They gave him something–William Bankes acknowledged that; it would have been pleasant if Cam had stuck a flower in his coat or clambered over his shoulder, as over her father's, to look at a picture of Vesuvius[32] in eruption; but they had also, his old friends could not but feel, destroyed something. What would a stranger think now? What did this Lily Briscoe think? Could one help noticing that habits grew on him? eccentricities, weaknesses perhaps? It was astonishing that a man of his intellect could stoop so low as he did–but that was too harsh a phrase–could depend so much as he did upon people's praise.

"Oh, but," said Lily, "think of his work!"

Whenever she "thought of his work" she always saw clearly before her a large kitchen table. It was Andrew's doing. She asked him what his father's books were about. "Subject and object and the nature of reality," Andrew had said. And when she said Heavens, she had no notion what that meant. "Think of a kitchen table then," he told her, "when you're not there."[33]

So now she always saw, when she thought of Mr. Ramsay's work, a scrubbed kitchen table. It lodged now in the fork of a pear tree, for they had reached the orchard. And with a painful effort of concentration, she focused her mind, not upon the silver-bossed bark of the tree, or upon its fish-shaped leaves, but upon a phantom kitchen table, one of those scrubbed board tables, grained and knotted, whose virtue seems to have been laid bare by years of muscular integrity, which stuck there, its four legs in air. Naturally, if one's days were passed in this seeing of

31. These characters are partly based on some of Woolf's family: Cam on the young Woolf herself; James on Adrian Stephen (see note 1); Andrew on the clever and sociable Thoby Stephen (see note 114); and Prue on Stella Duckworth, her beautiful half-sister (see note 113). Lily Briscoe is similar to both Woolf and her sister Vanessa Bell, an artist.
32. The volcano that destroyed the ancient city of Pompeii.
33. Perhaps a reflection of Leslie Stephen's philosophy, or of G. E. Moore's ideas. He was a realist philosopher whose work strongly influenced Woolf's brother Thoby Stephen when he was at Cambridge University.

angular essences, this reducing of lovely evenings, with all their flamingo clouds and blue and silver to a white deal four-legged table (and it was a mark of the finest minds to do so), naturally one could not be judged like an ordinary person.

Mr. Bankes liked her for bidding him "think of his work." He had thought of it, often and often. Times without number, he had said, "Ramsay is one of those men who do their best work before they are forty." He had made a definite contribution to philosophy in one little book when he was only five and twenty; what came after was more or less amplification, repetition. But the number of men who make a definite contribution to anything whatsoever is very small, he said, pausing by the pear tree, well brushed, scrupulously exact, exquisitely judicial. Suddenly, as if the movement of his hand had released it, the load of her accumulated impressions of him tilted up, and down poured in a ponderous avalanche all she felt about him. That was one sensation. Then up rose in a fume the essence of his being. That was another. She felt herself transfixed by the intensity of her perception; it was his severity; his goodness. I respect you (she addressed silently him in person) in every atom; you are not vain; you are entirely impersonal; you are finer than Mr. Ramsay; you are the finest human being that I know; you have neither wife nor child (without any sexual feeling, she longed to cherish that loneliness), you live for science (involuntarily, sections of potatoes rose before her eyes); praise would be an insult to you; generous, pure-hearted, heroic man! But simultaneously, she remembered how he had brought a valet all the way up here; objected to dogs on chairs; would prose for hours (until Mr. Ramsay slammed out of the room) about salt in vegetables and the iniquity of English cooks.

How then did it work out, all this? How did one judge people, think of them? How did one add up this and that and conclude that it was liking one felt or disliking? And to those words, what meaning attached, after all? Standing now, apparently transfixed, by the pear tree, impressions poured in upon her of those two men, and to follow her thought was like following a voice which speaks too quickly to be taken down by one's pencil, and the voice was her own voice saying without prompting undeniable, everlasting, contradictory things, so that even the fissures and humps on the bark of the pear tree were irrevocably fixed there for eternity. You have greatness, she continued, but Mr. Ramsay has none of it. He is petty, selfish, vain, egotistical; he is spoilt; he is a tyrant; he wears Mrs. Ramsay to death; but he has what you (she addressed Mr. Bankes) have not; a fiery unworldliness; he knows nothing about trifles; he loves dogs and his children. He has eight. Mr. Bankes has none. Did he not come down in two coats the other night and let Mrs. Ramsay trim his hair into a pudding basin? All of this danced up and down, like a company of gnats, each separate but all marvellously controlled in an invisible elastic net–danced up and down in

Lily's mind, in and about the branches of the pear tree, where still hung in effigy the scrubbed kitchen table, symbol of her profound respect for Mr. Ramsay's mind, until her thought which had spun quicker and quicker exploded of its own intensity; she felt released; a shot went off close at hand, and there came, flying from its fragments, frightened, effusive, tumultuous, a flock of starlings.

"Jasper!" said Mr. Bankes. They turned the way the starlings flew, over the terrace. Following the scatter of swift-flying birds in the sky they stepped through the gap in the high hedge straight into Mr. Ramsay, who boomed tragically at them, "Some one had blundered!"[34]

His eyes, glazed with emotion, defiant with tragic intensity, met theirs for a second, and trembled on the verge of recognition; but then, raising his hand, half-way to his face as if to avert, to brush off, in an agony of peevish shame, their normal gaze, as if he begged them to withhold for a moment what he knew to be inevitable, as if he impressed upon them his own child-like resentment of interruption, yet even in the moment of discovery was not to be routed utterly, but was determined to hold fast to something of this delicious emotion, this impure rhapsody of which he was ashamed, but in which he revelled–he turned abruptly, slammed his private door on them; and, Lily Briscoe and Mr. Bankes, looking uneasily up into the sky, observed that the flock of starlings which Jasper had routed with his gun had settled on the tops of the elm trees.[35]

5

"And even if it isn't fine tomorrow," said Mrs. Ramsay, raising her eyes to glance at William Bankes and Lily Briscoe as they passed, "it will be another day. And now," she said, thinking that Lily's charm was her Chinese eyes, aslant in her white, puckered little face, but it would take a clever man to see it, "and now stand up, and let me measure your leg," for they might go to the Lighthouse after all, and she must see if the stocking did not need to be an inch or two longer in the leg.

Smiling, for it was an admirable idea, that had flashed upon her this very second–William and Lily should marry–she took the heather-mixture stocking, with its criss-cross of steel needles at the mouth of it, and measured it against James's leg.

34. Tennyson; see note 21.

35. Jasper may represent Woolf's half-brothers, George and Gerald Duckworth, whom she saw as crass. Her writing makes reference to both of them having abused her sexually; what exactly happened is not clear, but her distaste for them was lifelong. Louise DeSalvo's Virginia Woolf: The Impact of Sexual Abuse on her Life and Work (New York: Ballantine, 1990) and Hermione Lee's biography Virginia Woolf (London: Chatto and Windus, 1999) both discuss the abuse possibilities in detail.

"My dear, stand still," she said, for in his jealousy, not liking to serve as measuring block for the Lighthouse keeper's little boy, James fidgeted purposely; and if he did that, how could she see, was it too long, was it too short? she asked.

She looked up–what demon possessed him, her youngest, her cherished?–and saw the room, saw the chairs, thought them fearfully shabby. Their entrails, as Andrew said the other day, were all over the floor; but then what was the point, she asked, of buying good chairs to let them spoil up here all through the winter when the house, with only one old woman to see to it, positively dripped with wet? Never mind, the rent was precisely twopence half-penny; the children loved it; it did her husband good to be three thousand, or if she must be accurate, three hundred miles from his libraries and his lectures and his disciples; and there was room for visitors. Mats, camp beds, crazy ghosts of chairs and tables whose London life of service was done–they did well enough here; and a photograph or two, and books. Books, she thought, grew of themselves. She never had time to read them. Alas! even the books that had been given her and inscribed by the hand of the poet himself: "For her whose wishes must be obeyed"[36] … "The happier Helen of our days"[37] … disgraceful to say, she had never read them. And Croom on the Mind[38] and Bates on the Savage Customs of Polynesia[39] ("My dear, stand still," she said)–neither of those could one send to the Lighthouse. At a certain moment, she supposed, the house would become so shabby that something must be done. If they could be taught to wipe their feet and not bring the beach in with them–that would be something. Crabs, she had to allow, if Andrew really wished to dissect them, or if Jasper believed that one could make soup from seaweed, one could not prevent it; or Rose's objects–shells, reeds, stones; for they were gifted, her children, but all in quite different ways. And the result of it was, she sighed, taking in the whole room from floor to ceiling, as she held the stocking against James's leg, that things got shabbier and got shabbier summer after summer. The mat was fading; the wall-paper was flapping. You couldn't tell any more that those were roses on it. Still, if every door in a house is left perpetually open, and no lockmaker in the whole of Scotland can mend a bolt, things must spoil. What was the use of flinging a green Cashmere shawl over the edge of a picture frame? In two weeks it would be the colour of pea soup. But it was the doors that annoyed her; every door was left open. She listened. The drawing-room door was open; the hall door was open; it sounded as if the bedroom doors were open; and certainly the window on the landing was open, for that she had opened herself. That windows should be open, and doors shut–simple as it was, could none of them

36. A joking reference to "She-who-must-be-obeyed," the terrifying queen of H. Rider Haggard's Victorian adventure novel She (serialized 1886-7). Julia Stephen inspired love and reverence in many writers and artists, and had grown up knowing many famous ones.
37. A reference to Helen of Troy, the most beautiful woman of the ancient world. See note 19 on Mrs. Ramsay as a mythical figure.
38. George Croom Robertson (1842-92), a Scottish philosopher and logician. Note Mrs. Ramsay's disinterest.
39. As in the previous note, Mrs. Ramsay has little interest in works of serious realism.

remember it? She would go into the maids' bedrooms at night and find them sealed like ovens, except for Marie's, the Swiss girl, who would rather go without a bath than without fresh air, but then at home, she had said, "the mountains are so beautiful." She had said that last night looking out of the window with tears in her eyes. "The mountains are so beautiful." Her father was dying there, Mrs. Ramsay knew. He was leaving them fatherless. Scolding and demonstrating (how to make a bed, how to open a window, with hands that shut and spread like a Frenchwoman's) all had folded itself quietly about her, when the girl spoke, as, after a flight through the sunshine the wings of a bird fold themselves quietly and the blue of its plumage changes from bright steel to soft purple. She had stood there silent for there was nothing to be said. He had cancer of the throat. At the recollection–how she had stood there, how the girl had said, "At home the mountains are so beautiful," and there was no hope, no hope whatever, she had a spasm of irritation, and speaking sharply, said to James:

"Stand still. Don't be tiresome," so that he knew instantly that her severity was real, and straightened his leg and she measured it.

The stocking was too short by half an inch at least, making allowance for the fact that Sorley's little boy would be less well grown than James.

"It's too short," she said, "ever so much too short."

Never did anybody look so sad. Bitter and black, half-way down, in the darkness, in the shaft which ran from the sunlight to the depths, perhaps a tear formed; a tear fell; the waters swayed this way and that, received it, and were at rest. Never did anybody look so sad.

But was it nothing but looks, people said? What was there behind it–her beauty and splendour? Had he blown his brains out, they asked, had he died the week before they were married–some other, earlier lover, of whom rumours reached one?[40] Or was there nothing? nothing but an incomparable beauty which she lived behind, and could do nothing to disturb? For easily though she might have said at some moment of intimacy when stories of great passion, of love foiled, of ambition thwarted came her way how she too had known or felt or been through it herself, she never spoke. She was silent always. She knew then–she knew without having learnt. Her simplicity fathomed what clever people falsified. Her singleness of mind made her drop plumb like a stone, alight exact as a bird, gave her, naturally, this swoop and fall of the spirit upon truth which delighted, eased, sustained–falsely perhaps.

40. Woolf wrote in "A Sketch of the Past" that her mother eternally mourned the sudden death of her first husband, Herbert Duckworth (see page 89 in Moments of Being. 2nd ed. Ed. Jeanne Schulkind. San Diego: Harvest Brace Jovanovich, 1985).

("Nature has but little clay," said Mr. Bankes once, much moved by her voice on the telephone, though she was only telling him a fact about a train, "like that of which she moulded you."[41] He saw her at the end of the line, Greek, blue-eyed, straight-nosed. How incongruous it seemed to be telephoning to a woman like that. The Graces assembling seemed to have joined hands in meadows of asphodel to compose that face.[42] Yes, he would catch the 10:30 at Euston.[43]

"But she's no more aware of her beauty than a child," said Mr. Bankes, replacing the receiver and crossing the room to see what progress the workmen were making with an hotel which they were building at the back of his house. And he thought of Mrs. Ramsay as he looked at that stir among the unfinished walls. For always, he thought, there was something incongruous to be worked into the harmony of her face. She clapped a deer-stalker's hat on her head; she ran across the lawn in galoshes to snatch a child from mischief. So that if it was her beauty merely that one thought of, one must remember the quivering thing, the living thing (they were carrying bricks up a little plank as he watched them), and work it into the picture; or if one thought of her simply as a woman, one must endow her with some freak of idiosyncrasy–she did not like admiration–or suppose some latent desire to doff her royalty of form as if her beauty bored her and all that men say of beauty, and she wanted only to be like other people, insignificant. He did not know. He did not know. He must go to his work.)

Knitting her reddish-brown hairy stocking, with her head outlined absurdly by the gilt frame, the green shawl which she had tossed over the edge of the frame, and the authenticated masterpiece by Michael Angelo,[44] Mrs. Ramsay smoothed out what had been harsh in her manner a moment before, raised his head, and kissed her little boy on the forehead. "Let us find another picture to cut out," she said.

6

But what had happened?

Some one had blundered.[45]

Starting from her musing she gave meaning to words which she had held

41. A variation of a line from the nineteenth-century writer Thomas Love Peacock's Headlong Hall (1815).
42. The Three Graces in Greek mythology are goddesses of beauty and charm. Asphodel flowers were said to grow in the underworld of the dead.
43. The 10:30 train from Euston Station in London.
44. Another spelling of Michelangelo (Buonarotti, 1475-1564), the influential sculptor, artist, and engineer.
45. Tennyson; see note 21.

meaningless in her mind for a long stretch of time. “Some one had blundered”–Fixing her short-sighted eyes upon her husband, who was now bearing down upon her, she gazed steadily until his closeness revealed to her (the jingle mated itself in her head) that something had happened, some one had blundered. But she could not for the life of her think what.

He shivered; he quivered. All his vanity, all his satisfaction in his own splendour, riding fell as a thunderbolt, fierce as a hawk at the head of his men through the valley of death, had been shattered, destroyed. Stormed at by shot and shell, boldly we rode and well, flashed through the valley of death, volleyed and thundered[46]–straight into Lily Briscoe and William Bankes. He quivered; he shivered.

Not for the world would she have spoken to him, realising, from the familiar signs, his eyes averted, and some curious gathering together of his person, as if he wrapped himself about and needed privacy into which to regain his equilibrium, that he was outraged and anguished. She stroked James’s head; she transferred to him what she felt for her husband, and, as she watched him chalk yellow the white dress shirt of a gentleman in the Army and Navy Stores catalogue, thought what a delight it would be to her should he turn out a great artist; and why should he not? He had a splendid forehead. Then, looking up, as her husband passed her once more, she was relieved to find that the ruin was veiled; domesticity triumphed; custom crooned its soothing rhythm, so that when stopping deliberately, as his turn came round again, at the window he bent quizzically and whimsically to tickle James’s bare calf with a sprig of something, she twitted him for having dispatched “that poor young man,” Charles Tansley. Tansley had had to go in and write his dissertation, he said.

“James will have to write *his* dissertation one of these days,” he added ironically, flicking his sprig.

Hating his father, James brushed away the tickling spray with which in a manner peculiar to him, compound of severity and humour, he teased his youngest son’s bare leg.

She was trying to get these tiresome stockings finished to send to Sorley’s little boy tomorrow, said Mrs. Ramsay.

There wasn’t the slightest possible chance that they could go to the Lighthouse tomorrow, Mr. Ramsay snapped out irascibly.

How did he know? she asked. The wind often changed.

46. Tennyson; see note 21.

The extraordinary irrationality of her remark, the folly of women's minds enraged him. He had ridden through the valley of death, been shattered and shivered[47]; and now, she flew in the face of facts, made his children hope what was utterly out of the question, in effect, told lies. He stamped his foot on the stone step. "Damn you," he said. But what had she said? Simply that it might be fine tomorrow. So it might.

Not with the barometer falling and the wind due west.

To pursue truth with such astonishing lack of consideration for other people's feelings, to rend the thin veils of civilization so wantonly, so brutally, was to her so horrible an outrage of human decency that, without replying, dazed and blinded, she bent her head as if to let the pelt of jagged hail, the drench of dirty water, bespatter her unrebuked. There was nothing to be said.

He stood by her in silence. Very humbly, at length, he said that he would step over and ask the Coastguards if she liked.

There was nobody whom she reverenced as she reverenced him.

She was quite ready to take his word for it, she said. Only then they need not cut sandwiches–that was all. They came to her, naturally, since she was a woman, all day long with this and that; one wanting this, another that; the children were growing up; she often felt she was nothing but a sponge sopped full of human emotions. Then he said, Damn you. He said, It must rain. He said, It won't rain; and instantly a Heaven of security opened before her. There was nobody she reverenced more. She was not good enough to tie his shoe strings, she felt.

Already ashamed of that petulance, of that gesticulation of the hands when charging at the head of his troops, Mr. Ramsay rather sheepishly prodded his son's bare legs once more, and then, as if he had her leave for it, with a movement which oddly reminded his wife of the great sea lion at the Zoo tumbling backwards after swallowing his fish and walloping off so that the water in the tank washes from side to side, he dived into the evening air which, already thinner, was taking the substance from leaves and hedges but, as if in return, restoring to roses and pinks a lustre which they had not had by day.

"Some one had blundered,"[48] he said again, striding off, up and down the terrace.

But how extraordinarily his note had changed! It was like the cuckoo;

47. See note 4.
48. Tennyson; see note 21.

"in June he gets out of tune"; as if he were trying over, tentatively seeking, some phrase for a new mood, and having only this at hand, used it, cracked though it was. But it sounded ridiculous–"Some one had blundered"–said like that, almost as a question, without any conviction, melodiously. Mrs. Ramsay could not help smiling, and soon, sure enough, walking up and down, he hummed it, dropped it, fell silent.

He was safe, he was restored to his privacy. He stopped to light his pipe, looked once at his wife and son in the window, and as one raises one's eyes from a page in an express train and sees a farm, a tree, a cluster of cottages as an illustration, a confirmation of something on the printed page to which one returns, fortified, and satisfied, so without his distinguishing either his son or his wife, the sight of them fortified him and satisfied him and consecrated his effort to arrive at a perfectly clear understanding of the problem which now engaged the energies of his splendid mind.

It was a splendid mind. For if thought is like the keyboard of a piano, divided into so many notes, or like the alphabet is ranged in twenty-six letters all in order, then his splendid mind had no sort of difficulty in running over those letters one by one, firmly and accurately, until it had reached, say, the letter Q. He reached Q. Very few people in the whole of England ever reach Q. Here, stopping for one moment by the stone urn which held the geraniums, he saw, but now far, far away, like children picking up shells, divinely innocent and occupied with little trifles at their feet and somehow entirely defenceless against a doom which he perceived, his wife and son, together, in the window. They needed his protection; he gave it them. But after Q? What comes next? After Q there are a number of letters the last of which is scarcely visible to mortal eyes, but glimmers red in the distance. Z is only reached once by one man in a generation. Still, if he could reach R it would be something. Here at least was Q. He dug his heels in at Q. Q he was sure of. Q he could demonstrate. If Q then is Q–R–. Here he knocked his pipe out, with two or three resonant taps on the handle of the urn, and proceeded. "Then R …" He braced himself. He clenched himself.[49]

Qualities that would have saved a ship's company exposed on a broiling sea with six biscuits and a flask of water–endurance and justice, foresight, devotion, skill, came to his help. R is then–what is R?

A shutter, like the leathern eyelid of a lizard, flickered over the intensity of his gaze and obscured the letter R. In that flash of darkness he heard people saying–he was a failure–that R was beyond him.

49. Leslie Stephen and Virginia Woolf, both highly intelligent, frequently shared the fear that their minds were second-rate and their books failures.

He would never reach R. On to R, once more. R–

Qualities that in a desolate expedition across the icy solitudes of the Polar region would have made him the leader, the guide, the counsellor, whose temper, neither sanguine nor despondent, surveys with equanimity what is to be and faces it, came to his help again. R–

The lizard's eye flickered once more. The veins on his forehead bulged. The geranium in the urn became startlingly visible and, displayed among its leaves, he could see, without wishing it, that old, that obvious distinction between the two classes of men; on the one hand the steady goers of superhuman strength who, plodding and persevering, repeat the whole alphabet in order, twenty-six letters in all, from start to finish; on the other the gifted, the inspired who, miraculously, lump all the letters together in one flash–the way of genius. He had not genius; he laid no claim to that: but he had, or might have had, the power to repeat every letter of the alphabet from A to Z accurately in order. Meanwhile, he stuck at Q. On, then, on to R.

Feelings that would not have disgraced a leader who, now that the snow has begun to fall and the mountain top is covered in mist, knows that he must lay himself down and die before morning comes, stole upon him, paling the colour of his eyes, giving him, even in the two minutes of his turn on the terrace, the bleached look of withered old age. Yet he would not die lying down; he would find some crag of rock, and there, his eyes fixed on the storm, trying to the end to pierce the darkness, he would die standing. He would never reach R.

He stood stock-still, by the urn, with the geranium flowing over it. How many men in a thousand million, he asked himself, reach Z after all? Surely the leader of a forlorn hope[50] may ask himself that, and answer, without treachery to the expedition behind him, "One perhaps." One in a generation. Is he to be blamed then if he is not that one? provided he has toiled honestly, given to the best of his power, and till he has no more left to give? And his fame lasts how long? It is permissible even for a dying hero to think before he dies how men will speak of him hereafter. His fame lasts perhaps two thousand years. And what are two thousand years? (asked Mr. Ramsay ironically, staring at the hedge). What, indeed, if you look from a mountain top down the long wastes of the ages? The very stone one kicks with one's boot will outlast Shakespeare. His own little light would shine, not very brightly, for a year or two, and would then be merged in some bigger light, and that in a bigger still. (He looked into the hedge, into the intricacy of the twigs.) Who then could blame the leader of that forlorn party which after all has climbed high enough to see the waste of the years and the perishing of the stars,

50. Originally a storming party.

if before death stiffens his limbs beyond the power of movement he does a little consciously raise his numbed fingers to his brow, and square his shoulders, so that when the search party comes they will find him dead at his post, the fine figure of a soldier? Mr. Ramsay squared his shoulders and stood very upright by the urn.

Who shall blame him, if, so standing for a moment he dwells upon fame, upon search parties, upon cairns raised by grateful followers over his bones? Finally, who shall blame the leader of the doomed expedition, if, having adventured to the uttermost, and used his strength wholly to the last ounce and fallen asleep not much caring if he wakes or not, he now perceives by some pricking in his toes that he lives, and does not on the whole object to live, but requires sympathy, and whisky, and some one to tell the story of his suffering to at once? Who shall blame him? Who will not secretly rejoice when the hero puts his armour off, and halts by the window and gazes at his wife and son, who, very distant at first, gradually come closer and closer, till lips and book and head are clearly before him, though still lovely and unfamiliar from the intensity of his isolation and the waste of ages and the perishing of the stars, and finally putting his pipe in his pocket and bending his magnificent head before her–who will blame him if he does homage to the beauty of the world?

7

But his son hated him. He hated him for coming up to them, for stopping and looking down on them; he hated him for interrupting them; he hated him for the exaltation and sublimity of his gestures; for the magnificence of his head; for his exactingness and egotism (for there he stood, commanding them to attend to him) but most of all he hated the twang and twitter of his father's emotion which, vibrating round them, disturbed the perfect simplicity and good sense of his relations with his mother. By looking fixedly at the page, he hoped to make him move on; by pointing his finger at a word, he hoped to recall his mother's attention, which, he knew angrily, wavered instantly his father stopped. But, no. Nothing would make Mr. Ramsay move on. There he stood, demanding sympathy.

Mrs. Ramsay, who had been sitting loosely, folding her son in her arm, braced herself, and, half turning, seemed to raise herself with an effort, and at once to pour erect into the air a rain of energy, a column of spray, looking at the same time animated and alive as if all her energies were being fused into force, burning and illuminating (quietly though she sat, taking up her stocking again), and into this delicious fecundity, this fountain and spray of life, the fatal sterility of the male plunged itself, like a beak of brass, barren and bare. He wanted sympathy. He

was a failure, he said. Mrs. Ramsay flashed her needles. Mr. Ramsay repeated, never taking his eyes from her face, that he was a failure. She blew the words back at him. "Charles Tansley…" she said. But he must have more than that. It was sympathy he wanted, to be assured of his genius, first of all, and then to be taken within the circle of life, warmed and soothed, to have his senses restored to him, his barrenness made futile, and all the rooms of the house made full of life–the drawing-room; behind the drawing-room the kitchen; above the kitchen the bedrooms; and beyond them the nurseries; they must be furnished, they must be filled with life.

Charles Tansley thought him the greatest metaphysician of the time,[51] she said. But he must have more than that. He must have sympathy. He must be assured that he too lived in the heart of life; was needed; not only here, but all over the world. Flashing her needles, confident, upright, she created drawing-room and kitchen, set them all aglow; bade him take his ease there, go in and out, enjoy himself. She laughed, she knitted. Standing between her knees, very stiff, James felt all her strength flaring up to be drunk and quenched by the beak of brass, the arid scimitar of the male, which smote mercilessly, again and again, demanding sympathy.

He was a failure, he repeated. Well, look then, feel then. Flashing her needles, glancing round about her, out of the window, into the room, at James himself, she assured him, beyond a shadow of a doubt, by her laugh, her poise, her competence (as a nurse carrying a light across a dark room assures a fractious child), that it was real; the house was full; the garden blowing. If he put implicit faith in her, nothing should hurt him; however deep he buried himself or climbed high, not for a second should he find himself without her. So boasting of her capacity to surround and protect, there was scarcely a shell of herself left for her to know herself by; all was so lavished and spent; and James, as he stood stiff between her knees, felt her rise in a rosy-flowered fruit tree laid with leaves and dancing boughs into which the beak of brass, the arid scimitar of his father, the egotistical man, plunged and smote, demanding sympathy.

Filled with her words, like a child who drops off satisfied, he said, at last, looking at her with humble gratitude, restored, renewed, that he would take a turn; he would watch the children playing cricket. He went.

Immediately, Mrs. Ramsey seemed to fold herself together, one petal closed in another, and the whole fabric fell in exhaustion upon itself, so that she had only strength enough to move her finger, in exquisite abandonment to exhaustion, across the page of Grimm's fairy story, while there throbbed through her, like a pulse in a spring which has expanded to its

51. Leslie Stephen wrote several works on moral philosophy, and was highly thought of as a critic.

full width and now gently ceases to beat, the rapture of successful creation.

Every throb of this pulse seemed, as he walked away, to enclose her and her husband, and to give to each that solace which two different notes, one high, one low, struck together, seem to give each other as they combine. Yet as the resonance died, and she turned to the Fairy Tale again, Mrs. Ramsey felt not only exhausted in body (afterwards, not at the time, she always felt this) but also there tinged her physical fatigue some faintly disagreeable sensation with another origin. Not that, as she read aloud the story of the Fisherman's Wife,[52] she knew precisely what it came from; nor did she let herself put into words her dissatisfaction when she realized, at the turn of the page when she stopped and heard dully, ominously, a wave fall, how it came from this: she did not like, even for a second, to feel finer than her husband; and further, could not bear not being entirely sure, when she spoke to him, of the truth of what she said. Universities and people wanting him, lectures and books and their being of the highest importance–all that she did not doubt for a moment; but it was their relation, and his coming to her like that, openly, so that any one could see, that discomposed her; for then people said he depended on her, when they must know that of the two he was infinitely the more important, and what she gave the world, in comparison with what he gave, negligible. But then again, it was the other thing too–not being able to tell him the truth, being afraid, for instance, about the greenhouse roof and the expense it would be, fifty pounds perhaps to mend it; and then about his books, to be afraid that he might guess, what she a little suspected, that his last book was not quite his best book (she gathered that from William Bankes); and then to hide small daily things, and the children seeing it, and the burden it laid on them–all this diminished the entire joy, the pure joy, of the two notes sounding together, and let the sound die on her ear now with a dismal flatness.

A shadow was on the page; she looked up. It was Augustus Carmichael shuffling past, precisely now, at the very moment when it was painful to be reminded of the inadequacy of human relationships, that the most perfect was flawed, and could not bear the examination which, loving her husband, with her instinct for truth, she turned upon it; when it was painful to feel herself convicted of unworthiness, and impeded in her proper function by these lies, these exaggerations,–it was at this moment when she was fretted thus ignobly in the wake of her exaltation, that Mr. Carmichael shuffled past, in his yellow slippers, and some demon in her made it necessary for her to call out, as he passed,

52. One of the Grimm brothers' collected German fairy tales, first published in English in 1825. It tells of a poor fisherman who catches and releases a prince in the form of a flounder. In return, the fisherman's wife asks more and more favours of the fish, until she seeks to become godlike, at which she finds herself returned to her original wretched state.

"Going indoors Mr. Carmichael?"

8

He said nothing. He took opium. The children said he had stained his beard yellow with it. Perhaps. What was obvious to her was that the poor man was unhappy, came to them every year as an escape; and yet every year she felt the same thing; he did not trust her. She said, "I am going to the town. Shall I get you stamps, paper, tobacco?" and she felt him wince. He did not trust her. It was his wife's doing. She remembered that iniquity of his wife's towards him, which had made her turn to steel and adamant there, in the horrible little room in St John's Wood, when with her own eyes she had seen that odious woman turn him out of the house. He was unkempt; he dropped things on his coat; he had the tiresomeness of an old man with nothing in the world to do; and she turned him out of the room. She said, in her odious way, "Now, Mrs. Ramsay and I want to have a little talk together," and Mrs. Ramsay could see, as if before her eyes, the innumerable miseries of his life. Had he money enough to buy tobacco? Did he have to ask her for it? half a crown?[53] eighteenpence? Oh, she could not bear to think of the little indignities she made him suffer. And always now (why, she could not guess, except that it came probably from that woman somehow) he shrank from her. He never told her anything. But what more could she have done? There was a sunny room given up to him. The children were good to him. Never did she show a sign of not wanting him. She went out of her way indeed to be friendly. Do you want stamps, do you want tobacco? Here's a book you might like and so on. And after all–after all (here insensibly she drew herself together, physically, the sense of her own beauty becoming, as it did so seldom, present to her) after all, she had not generally any difficulty in making people like her; for instance, George Manning; Mr. Wallace; famous as they were,[54] they would come to her of an evening, quietly, and talk alone over her fire. She bore about with her, she could not help knowing it, the torch of her beauty; she carried it erect into any room that she entered; and after all, veil it as she might, and shrink from the monotony of bearing that it imposed on her, her beauty was apparent. She had been admired. She had been loved. She had entered rooms where mourners sat. Tears had flown in her presence. Men, and women too, letting go to the multiplicity of things, had allowed themselves with her the relief of simplicity. It injured her that he should shrink. It hurt her. And yet not cleanly, not rightly. That was what she minded, coming as it did on top of her discontent with her husband; the sense she had now when Mr. Carmichael shuffled past, just

53. A coin worth thirty pence.

54. See note 36 on Julia Stephen's connection with the famous.

nodding to her question, with a book beneath his arm, in his yellow slippers, that she was suspected; and that all this desire of hers to give, to help, was vanity. For her own self-satisfaction was it that she wished so instinctively to help, to give, that people might say of her, "O Mrs. Ramsay! dear Mrs. Ramsay … Mrs. Ramsay, of course!" and need her and send for her and admire her? Was it not secretly this that she wanted, and therefore when Mr. Carmichael shrank away from her, as he did at this moment, making off to some corner where he did acrostics endlessly, she did not feel merely snubbed back in her instinct, but made aware of the pettiness of some part of her, and of human relations, how flawed they are, how despicable, how self-seeking, at their best. Shabby and worn out, and not presumably (her cheeks were hollow, her hair was white) any longer a sight that filled the eyes with joy, she had better devote her mind to the story of the Fisherman and his Wife and so pacify that bundle of sensitiveness (none of her children was as sensitive as he was), her son James.

"The man's heart grew heavy," she read aloud, "and he would not go. He said to himself, 'It is not right,' and yet he went. And when he came to the sea the water was quite purple and dark blue, and grey and thick, and no longer so green and yellow, but it was still quiet. And he stood there and said–"

Mrs. Ramsay could have wished that her husband had not chosen that moment to stop. Why had he not gone as he said to watch the children playing cricket? But he did not speak; he looked; he nodded; he approved; he went on. He slipped, seeing before him that hedge which had over and over again rounded some pause, signified some conclusion, seeing his wife and child, seeing again the urns with the trailing of red geraniums which had so often decorated processes of thought, and bore, written up among their leaves, as if they were scraps of paper on which one scribbles notes in the rush of reading–he slipped, seeing all this, smoothly into speculation suggested by an article in *The Times* about the number of Americans who visit Shakespeare's house every year. If Shakespeare had never existed, he asked, would the world have differed much from what it is today? Does the progress of civilization depend upon great men? Is the lot of the average human being better now than in the time of the Pharaohs? Is the lot of the average human being, however, he asked himself, the criterion by which we judge the measure of civilization? Possibly not. Possibly the greatest good requires the existence of a slave class. The liftman in the Tube[55] is an eternal necessity. The thought was distasteful to him. He tossed his head. To avoid it, he would find some way of snubbing the predominance of the arts. He would argue that the world exists for the average human being; that the arts are merely a decoration imposed on the top of human life; they do not express

55. The elevator operator in the London subway.

it. Nor is Shakespeare necessary to it. Not knowing precisely why it was that he wanted to disparage Shakespeare and come to the rescue of the man who stands eternally in the door of the lift, he picked a leaf sharply from the hedge. All this would have to be dished up for the young men at Cardiff[56] next month, he thought; here, on his terrace, he was merely foraging and picnicking (he threw away the leaf that he had picked so peevishly) like a man who reaches from his horse to pick a bunch of roses, or stuffs his pockets with nuts as he ambles at his ease through the lanes and fields of a country known to him from boyhood. It was all familiar; this turning, that stile, that cut across the fields. Hours he would spend thus, with his pipe, of an evening, thinking up and down and in and out of the old familiar lanes and commons, which were all stuck about with the history of that campaign there, the life of this statesman here, with poems and with anecdotes, with figures too, this thinker, that soldier; all very brisk and clear; but at length the lane, the field, the common, the fruitful nut-tree and the flowering hedge led him on to that further turn of the road where he dismounted always, tied his horse to a tree, and proceeded on foot alone. He reached the edge of the lawn and looked out on the bay beneath.

It was his fate, his peculiarity, whether he wished it or not, to come out thus on a spit of land which the sea is slowly eating away, and there to stand, like a desolate sea-bird, alone. It was his power, his gift, suddenly to shed all superfluities, to shrink and diminish so that he looked barer and felt sparer, even physically, yet lost none of his intensity of mind, and so to stand on his little ledge facing the dark of human ignorance, how we know nothing and the sea eats away the ground we stand on–that was his fate, his gift. But having thrown away, when he dismounted, all gestures and fripperies, all trophies of nuts and roses, and shrunk so that not only fame but even his own name was forgotten by him, kept even in that desolation a vigilance which spared no phantom and luxuriated in no vision, and it was in this guise that he inspired in William Bankes (intermittently) and in Charles Tansley (obsequiously)and in his wife now, when she looked up and saw him standing at the edge of the lawn, profoundly, reverence, and pity, and gratitude too, as a stake driven into the bed of a channel upon which the gulls perch and the waves beat inspires in merry boat-loads a feeling of gratitude for the duty it is taking upon itself of marking the channel out there in the floods alone.

"But the father of eight children has no choice." Muttering half aloud, so he broke off, turned, sighed, raised his eyes, sought the figure of his wife reading stories to his little boy, filled his pipe. He turned from the sight of human ignorance and human fate and the sea eating the ground we stand on, which, had he been able to contemplate it fixedly might have

56. Probably Cardiff University or the University of Wales, founded in 1883 and 1893 respectively.

led to something; and found consolation in trifles so slight compared with the august theme just now before him that he was disposed to slur that comfort over, to deprecate it, as if to be caught happy in a world of misery was for an honest man the most despicable of crimes. It was true; he was for the most part happy; he had his wife; he had his children; he had promised in six weeks' time to talk "some nonsense" to the young men of Cardiff about Locke, Hume, Berkeley,[57] and the causes of the French Revolution. But this and his pleasure in it, his glory in the phrases he made, in the ardour of youth, in his wife's beauty, in the tributes that reached him from Swansea, Cardiff, Exeter, Southampton, Kidderminster, Oxford, Cambridge[58]–all had to be deprecated and concealed under the phrase "talking nonsense," because, in effect, he had not done the thing he might have done. It was a disguise; it was the refuge of a man afraid to own his own feelings, who could not say, This is what I like–this is what I am; and rather pitiable and distasteful to William Bankes and Lily Briscoe, who wondered why such concealments should be necessary; why he needed always praise; why so brave a man in thought should be so timid in life; how strangely he was venerable and laughable at one and the same time.

Teaching and preaching is beyond human power, Lily suspected. (She was putting away her things.) If you are exalted you must somehow come a cropper. Mrs. Ramsay gave him what he asked too easily. Then the change must be so upsetting, Lily said. He comes in from his books and finds us all playing games and talking nonsense. Imagine what a change from the things he thinks about, she said.

He was bearing down upon them. Now he stopped dead and stood looking in silence at the sea. Now he had turned away again.

9

Yes, Mr. Bankes said, watching him go. It was a thousand pities. (Lily had said something about his frightening her–he changed from one mood to another so suddenly.) Yes, said Mr. Bankes, it was a thousand pities that Ramsay could not behave a little more like other people. (For he liked Lily Briscoe; he could discuss Ramsay with her quite openly.) It was for that reason, he said, that the young don't read Carlyle[59]. A crusty old grumbler who lost his temper if the porridge was cold, why should he preach to us? was what Mr. Bankes understood that young people said nowadays. It was a thousand pities if you thought, as he did, that Carlyle was one of the great teachers of mankind. Lily was ashamed to say that she had not read Carlyle since she was at school. But in her opinion

57. All famous British philosophers: John Locke (1632-1704); David Hume (1711-76); George Berkeley (1685-1753).
58. British cities.
59. Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), a very well-known Scottish philosopher and social commentator.

one liked Mr. Ramsay all the better for thinking that if his little finger ached the whole world must come to an end. It was not *that* she minded. For who could be deceived by him? He asked you quite openly to flatter him, to admire him, his little dodges deceived nobody. What she disliked was his narrowness, his blindness, she said, looking after him.

"A bit of a hypocrite?" Mr. Bankes suggested, looking too at Mr. Ramsay's back, for was he not thinking of his friendship, and of Cam refusing to give him a flower, and of all those boys and girls, and his own house, full of comfort, but, since his wife's death, quiet rather? Of course, he had his work… All the same, he rather wished Lily to agree that Ramsay was, as he said, "a bit of a hypocrite."

Lily Briscoe went on putting away her brushes, looking up, looking down. Looking up, there he was–Mr. Ramsay–advancing towards them, swinging, careless, oblivious, remote. A bit of a hypocrite? she repeated. Oh, no–the most sincere of men, the truest (here he was), the best; but, looking down, she thought, he is absorbed in himself, he is tyrannical, he is unjust; and kept looking down, purposely, for only so could she keep steady, staying with the Ramsays. Directly one looked up and saw them, what she called "being in love" flooded them. They became part of that unreal but penetrating and exciting universe which is the world seen through the eyes of love. The sky stuck to them; the birds sang through them. And, what was even more exciting, she felt, too, as she saw Mr. Ramsay bearing down and retreating, and Mrs. Ramsay sitting with James in the window and the cloud moving and the tree bending, how life, from being made up of little separate incidents which one lived one by one, became curled and whole like a wave which bore one up and threw one down with it, there, with a dash on the beach.[60]

Mr. Bankes expected her to answer. And she was about to say something criticizing Mrs. Ramsay, how she was alarming, too, in her way, high-handed, or words to that effect, when Mr. Bankes made it entirely unnecessary for her to speak by his rapture. For such it was considering his age, turned sixty, and his cleanliness and his impersonality, and the white scientific coat which seemed to clothe him. For him to gaze as Lily saw him gazing at Mrs. Ramsay was a rapture, equivalent, Lily felt, to the loves of dozens of young men (and perhaps Mrs. Ramsay had never excited the loves of dozens of young men). It was love, she thought, pretending to move her canvas, distilled and filtered; love that never attempted to clutch its object; but, like the love which mathematicians bear their symbols, or poets their phrases, was meant to be spread over the world and become part of the human gain. So it was indeed. The world by all means should have shared it, could Mr. Bankes have said why that woman pleased him so; why the sight of her reading a fairy tale to her boy had upon him

60. See Woolf's later novel, The Waves (1931), which extends this image.

precisely the same effect as the solution of a scientific problem, so that he rested in contemplation of it, and felt, as he felt when he had proved something absolute about the digestive system of plants, that barbarity was tamed, the reign of chaos subdued.

Such a rapture–for by what other name could one call it?–made Lily Briscoe forget entirely what she had been about to say. It was nothing of importance; something about Mrs. Ramsay. It paled beside this "rapture," this silent stare, for which she felt intense gratitude; for nothing so solaced her, eased her of the perplexity of life, and miraculously raised its burdens, as this sublime power, this heavenly gift, and one would no more disturb it, while it lasted, than break up the shaft of sunlight, lying level across the floor.

That people should love like this, that Mr. Bankes should feel this for Mrs. Ramsey (she glanced at him musing) was helpful, was exalting. She wiped one brush after another upon a piece of old rag, menially, on purpose. She took shelter from the reverence which covered all women; she felt herself praised. Let him gaze; she would steal a look at her picture.

She could have wept. It was bad, it was bad, it was infinitely bad! She could have done it differently of course; the colour could have been thinned and faded; the shapes etherealised; that was how Paunceforte[61] would have seen it. But then she did not see it like that. She saw the colour burning on a framework of steel; the light of a butterfly's wing lying upon the arches of a cathedral.[62] Of all that only a few random marks scrawled upon the canvas remained. And it would never be seen; never be hung even, and there was Mr. Tansley whispering in her ear, "Women can't paint, women can't write …"

She now remembered what she had been going to say about Mrs. Ramsay. She did not know how she would have put it; but it would have been something critical. She had been annoyed the other night by some highhandedness. Looking along the level of Mr. Bankes's glance at her, she thought that no woman could worship another woman in the way he worshipped; they could only seek shelter under the shade which Mr. Bankes extended over them both. Looking along his beam she added to it her different ray, thinking that she was unquestionably the loveliest of people (bowed over her book); the best perhaps; but also, different too from the perfect shape which one saw there. But why different, and how different? she asked herself, scraping her palette of all those mounds of blue and green which seemed to her like clods with no life in them now, yet she vowed, she would inspire them, force them to move, flow, do her bidding tomorrow. How did she differ?

61. An invented artist; see note 16.

62. Compare this with Lily's later vision of her painting (see note 148), and with Mrs. Ramsay's view of male and female (note 113).

What was the spirit in her, the essential thing, by which, had you found a crumpled glove in the corner of a sofa, you would have known it, from its twisted finger, hers indisputably? She was like a bird for speed, an arrow for directness. She was willful; she was commanding (of course, Lily reminded herself, I am thinking of her relations with women, and I am much younger, an insignificant person, living off the Brompton Road).[63] She opened bedroom windows. She shut doors. (So she tried to start the tune of Mrs. Ramsay in her head.) Arriving late at night, with a light tap on one's bedroom door, wrapped in an old fur coat (for the setting of her beauty was always that–hasty, but apt), she would enact again whatever it might be–Charles Tansley losing his umbrella; Mr. Carmichael snuffling and sniffing; Mr. Bankes saying, "The vegetable salts are lost." All this she would adroitly shape; even maliciously twist; and, moving over to the window, in pretence that she must go,–it was dawn, she could see the sun rising,–half turn back, more intimately, but still always laughing, insist that she must, Minta must, they all must marry, since in the whole world whatever laurels might be tossed to her (but Mrs. Ramsay cared not a fig for her painting), or triumphs won by her (probably Mrs. Ramsay had had her share of those), and here she saddened, darkened, and came back to her chair, there could be no disputing this: an unmarried woman (she lightly took her hand for a moment), an unmarried woman has missed the best of life. The house seemed full of children sleeping and Mrs. Ramsay listening; shaded lights and regular breathing.

Oh, but, Lily would say, there was her father; her home; even, had she dared to say it, her painting. But all this seemed so little, so virginal, against the other. Yet, as the night wore on, and white lights parted the curtains, and even now and then some bird chirped in the garden, gathering a desperate courage she would urge her own exemption from the universal law; plead for it; she liked to be alone; she liked to be herself; she was not made for that; and so have to meet a serious stare from eyes of unparalleled depth, and confront Mrs. Ramsay's simple certainty (and she was childlike now) that her dear Lily, her little Brisk, was a fool. Then, she remembered, she had laid her head on Mrs. Ramsay's lap and laughed and laughed and laughed, laughed almost hysterically at the thought of Mrs. Ramsay presiding with immutable calm over destinies which she completely failed to understand. There she sat, simple, serious. She had recovered her sense of her now–this was the glove's twisted finger. But into what sanctuary had one penetrated? Lily Briscoe had looked up at last, and there was Mrs. Ramsay, unwitting entirely what had caused her laughter, still presiding, but now with every trace of wilfulness abolished, and in its stead, something clear as the space which the clouds at last uncover–the little space of sky which sleeps beside the moon.

63. See note 11.

Was it wisdom? Was it knowledge? Was it, once more, the deceptiveness of beauty, so that all one's perceptions, half way to truth, were tangled in a golden mesh? or did she lock up within her some secret which certainly Lily Briscoe believed people must have for the world to go on at all? Every one could not be as helter skelter, hand to mouth as she was. But if they knew, could they tell one what they knew? Sitting on the floor with her arms round Mrs. Ramsay's knees, close as she could get, smiling to think that Mrs. Ramsay would never know the reason of that pressure, she imagined how in the chambers of the mind and heart of the woman who was, physically, touching her, were stood, like the treasures in the tombs of kings, tablets bearing sacred inscriptions, which if one could spell them out, would teach one everything, but they would never be offered openly, never made public. What art was there, known to love or cunning, by which one pressed through into those secret chambers? What device for becoming, like waters poured into one jar, inextricably the same, one with the object one adored? Could the body achieve, or the mind, subtly mingling in the intricate passages of the brain? or the heart? Could loving, as people called it, make her and Mrs. Ramsay one? for it was not knowledge but unity that she desired, not inscriptions on tablets, nothing that could be written in any language known to men, but intimacy itself, which is knowledge, she had thought, leaning her head on Mrs. Ramsay's knee.

Nothing happened. Nothing! Nothing! as she leant her head against Mrs. Ramsay's knee. And yet, she knew knowledge and wisdom were stored up in Mrs. Ramsay's heart. How, then, she had asked herself, did one know one thing or another thing about people, sealed as they were? Only like a bee, drawn by some sweetness or sharpness in the air intangible to touch or taste, one haunted the dome-shaped hive, ranged the wastes of the air over the countries of the world alone, and then haunted the hives with their murmurs and their stirrings; the hives, which were people. Mrs. Ramsay rose. Lily rose. Mrs. Ramsay went. For days there hung about her, as after a dream some subtle change is felt in the person one has dreamt of, more vividly than anything she said, the sound of murmuring and, as she sat in the wicker arm-chair in the drawing-room window she wore, to Lily's eyes, an august shape; the shape of a dome.

This ray passed level with Mr. Bankes's ray straight to Mrs. Ramsay sitting reading there with James at her knee. But now while she still looked, Mr. Bankes had done. He had put on his spectacles. He had stepped back. He had raised his hand. He had slightly narrowed his clear blue eyes, when Lily, rousing herself, saw what he was at, and winced like a dog who sees a hand raised to strike it. She would have snatched her picture off the easel, but she said to herself, One must. She braced herself to stand the awful trial of some one looking at her picture. One must, she said, one must. And if it must be seen, Mr. Bankes was less alarming than another. But that any other eyes should see the residue of her thirty-three years, the deposit of each day's living mixed with something

more secret than she had ever spoken or shown in the course of all those days was an agony. At the same time it was immensely exciting.

Nothing could be cooler and quieter. Taking out a pen-knife, Mr. Bankes tapped the canvas with the bone handle. What did she wish to indicate by the triangular purple shape, "just there"? he asked.

It was Mrs. Ramsay reading to James, she said. She knew his objection–that no one could tell it for a human shape. But she had made no attempt at likeness, she said. For what reason had she introduced them then? he asked. Why indeed?–except that if there, in that corner, it was bright, here, in this, she felt the need of darkness. Simple, obvious, commonplace, as it was, Mr. Bankes was interested. Mother and child then–objects of universal veneration, and in this case the mother was famous for her beauty–might be reduced, he pondered, to a purple shadow without irreverence.

But the picture was not of them, she said. Or, not in his sense. There were other senses too in which one might reverence them. By a shadow here and a light there, for instance. Her tribute took that form if, as she vaguely supposed, a picture must be a tribute. A mother and child might be reduced to a shadow without irreverence. A light here required a shadow there. He considered. He was interested. He took it scientifically in complete good faith. The truth was that all his prejudices were on the other side, he explained. The largest picture in his drawing-room, which painters had praised, and valued at a higher price than he had given for it, was of the cherry trees in blossom on the banks of the Kennet[64]. He had spent his honeymoon on the banks of the Kennet, he said. Lily must come and see that picture, he said. But now–he turned, with his glasses raised to the scientific examination of her canvas. The question being one of the relations of masses, of lights and shadows, which, to be honest, he had never considered before, he would like to have it explained–what then did she wish to make of it? And he indicated the scene before them. She looked. She could not show him what she wished to make of it, could not see it even herself, without a brush in her hand. She took up once more her old painting position with the dim eyes and the absent-minded manner, subduing all her impressions as a woman to something much more general; becoming once more under the power of that vision which she had seen clearly once and must now grope for among hedges and houses and mothers and children–her picture. It was a question, she remembered, how to connect this mass on the right hand with that on the left. She might do it by bringing the line of the branch across so; or break the vacancy in the foreground by an object (James perhaps) so. But the danger was that by doing that the unity of the whole might be broken. She stopped; she did not want to bore him; she took the canvas lightly off the

64. A tributary river of the Thames in England.

easel.

But it had been seen; it had been taken from her. This man had shared with her something profoundly intimate. And, thanking Mr. Ramsay for it and Mrs. Ramsay for it and the hour and the place, crediting the world with a power which she had not suspected–that one could walk away down that long gallery not alone any more but arm in arm with somebody–the strangest feeling in the world, and the most exhilarating–she nicked the catch of her paint-box to, more firmly than was necessary, and the nick seemed to surround in a circle forever the paint-box, the lawn, Mr. Bankes, and that wild villain, Cam, dashing past.

10

For Cam grazed the easel by an inch; she would not stop for Mr. Bankes and Lily Briscoe; though Mr. Bankes, who would have liked a daughter of his own, held out his hand; she would not stop for her father, whom she grazed also by an inch; nor for her mother, who called "Cam! I want you a moment!" as she dashed past. She was off like a bird, bullet, or arrow, impelled by what desire, shot by whom, at what directed, who could say? What, what? Mrs. Ramsay pondered, watching her. It might be a vision–of a shell, of a wheelbarrow, of a fairy kingdom on the far side of the hedge; or it might be the glory of speed; no one knew. But when Mrs. Ramsay called "Cam!" a second time, the projectile dropped in mid career, and Cam came lagging back, pulling a leaf by the way, to her mother.

What was she dreaming about, Mrs. Ramsay wondered, seeing her engrossed, as she stood there, with some thought of her own, so that she had to repeat the message twice–ask Mildred if Andrew, Miss Doyle, and Mr. Rayley have come back?–The words seemed to be dropped into a well, where, if the waters were clear, they were also so extraordinarily distorting that, even as they descended, one saw them twisting about to make Heaven knows what pattern on the floor of the child's mind. What message would Cam give the cook? Mrs. Ramsay wondered. And indeed it was only by waiting patiently, and hearing that there was an old woman in the kitchen with very red cheeks, drinking soup out of a basin, that Mrs. Ramsay at last prompted that parrot-like instinct which had picked up Mildred's words quite accurately and could now produce them, if one waited, in a colourless singsong. Shifting from foot to foot, Cam repeated the words, "No, they haven't, and I've told Ellen to clear away tea."

Minta Doyle and Paul Rayley had not come back then. That could only mean, Mrs. Ramsay thought, one thing. She must accept him, or she must

refuse him. This going off after luncheon for a walk, even though Andrew was with them–what could it mean? except that she had decided, rightly, Mrs. Ramsay thought (and she was very, very fond of Minta), to accept that good fellow, who might not be brilliant, but then, thought Mrs. Ramsay, realising that James was tugging at her, to make her go on reading aloud the Fisherman and his Wife, she did in her own heart infinitely prefer boobies to clever men who wrote dissertations; Charles Tansley, for instance. Anyhow it must have happened, one way or the other, by now.

But she read, "Next morning the wife awoke first, and it was just daybreak, and from her bed she saw the beautiful country lying before her. Her husband was still stretching himself…"[65]

But how could Minta say now that she would not have him? Not if she agreed to spend whole afternoons trapesing about the country alone–for Andrew would be off after his crabs–but possibly Nancy was with them. She tried to recall the sight of them standing at the hall door after lunch. There they stood, looking at the sky, wondering about the weather, and she had said, thinking partly to cover their shyness, partly to encourage them to be off (for her sympathies were with Paul),

"There isn't a cloud anywhere within miles," at which she could feel little Charles Tansley, who had followed them out, snigger. But she did it on purpose. Whether Nancy was there or not, she could not be certain, looking from one to the other in her mind's eye.

She read on: "Ah, wife," said the man, "why should we be King? I do not want to be King." "Well," said the wife, "if you won't be King, I will; go to the Flounder, for I will be King."

"Come in or go out, Cam," she said, knowing that Cam was attracted only by the word "Flounder" and that in a moment she would fidget and fight with James as usual. Cam shot off. Mrs. Ramsay went on reading, relieved, for she and James shared the same tastes and were comfortable together.

"And when he came to the sea, it was quite dark grey, and the water heaved up from below, and smelt putrid. Then he went and stood by it and said,

'Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Come, I pray thee, here to me;
For my wife, good Ilsabil,
Wills not as I'd have her will.'

65. See note 52 on the fairy tale.

‘Well, what does she want then?’ said the Flounder.” And where were they now? Mrs. Ramsay wondered, reading and thinking, quite easily, both at the same time; for the story of the Fisherman and his Wife was like the bass gently accompanying a tune, which now and then ran up unexpectedly into the melody.[66] And when should she be told? If nothing happened, she would have to speak seriously to Minta. For she could not go trapesing about all over the country, even if Nancy were with them (she tried again, unsuccessfully, to visualize their backs going down the path, and to count them). She was responsible to Minta’s parents–the Owl and the Poker. Her nicknames for them shot into her mind as she read. The Owl and the Poker–yes, they would be annoyed if they heard–and they were certain to hear–that Minta, staying with the Ramsays, had been seen etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. “He wore a wig in the House of Commons and she ably assisted him at the head of the stairs,” she repeated, fishing them up out of her mind by a phrase which, coming back from some party, she had made to amuse her husband. Dear, dear, Mrs. Ramsay said to herself, how did they produce this incongruous daughter? this tomboy Minta, with a hole in her stocking? How did she exist in that portentous atmosphere where the maid was always removing in a dust-pan the sand that the parrot had scattered, and conversation was almost entirely reduced to the exploits–interesting perhaps, but limited after all–of that bird? Naturally, one had asked her to lunch, tea, dinner, finally to stay with them up at Finlay[67], which had resulted in some friction with the Owl, her mother, and more calling, and more conversation, and more sand, and really at the end of it, she had told enough lies about parrots to last her a lifetime (so she had said to her husband that night, coming back from the party). However, Minta came…Yes, she came, Mrs. Ramsay thought, suspecting some thorn in the tangle of this thought; and disengaging it found it to be this: a woman had once accused her of “robbing her of her daughter’s affections”; something Mrs. Doyle had said made her remember that charge again. Wishing to dominate, wishing to interfere, making people do what she wished–that was the charge against her, and she thought it most unjust. How could she help being “like that” to look at? No one could accuse her of taking pains to impress. She was often ashamed of her own shabbiness. Nor was she domineering, nor was she tyrannical. It was more true about hospitals and drains and the dairy. About things like that she did feel passionately, and would, if she had the chance, have liked to take people by the scruff of their necks and make them see. No hospital on the whole island. It was a disgrace. Milk delivered at your door in London positively brown with dirt. It should be made illegal. A model dairy and a hospital up here–those two things she

66. See note 52 on the fairy tale.
67. The site of the holiday house in the Hebrides islands off Scotland.

would have liked to do, herself.[68] But how? With all these children? When they were older, then perhaps she would have time; when they were all at school.

Oh, but she never wanted James to grow a day older! or Cam either. These two she would have liked to keep for ever just as they were, demons of wickedness, angels of delight, never to see them grow up into long-legged monsters. Nothing made up for the loss. When she read just now to James, "and there were numbers of soldiers with kettledrums and trumpets," and his eyes darkened, she thought, why should they grow up and lose all that? He was the most gifted, the most sensitive of her children. But all, she thought, were full of promise. Prue, a perfect angel with the others, and sometimes now, at night especially, she took one's breath away with her beauty. Andrew–even her husband admitted that his gift for mathematics was extraordinary. And Nancy and Roger, they were both wild creatures now, scampering about over the country all day long. As for Rose, her mouth was too big, but she had a wonderful gift with her hands. If they had charades, Rose made the dresses; made everything; liked best arranging tables, flowers, anything.[69] She did not like it that Jasper should shoot birds; but it was only a stage; they all went through stages. Why, she asked, pressing her chin on James's head, should they grow up so fast? Why should they go to school? She would have liked always to have had a baby. She was happiest carrying one in her arms. Then people might say she was tyrannical, domineering, masterful, if they chose; she did not mind. And, touching his hair with her lips, she thought, he will never be so happy again, but stopped herself, remembering how it angered her husband that she should say that. Still, it was true. They were happier now than they would ever be again. A tenpenny tea set made Cam happy for days. She heard them stamping and crowing on the floor above her head the moment they awoke. They came bustling along the passage. Then the door sprang open and in they came, fresh as roses, staring, wide awake, as if this coming into the dining-room after breakfast, which they did every day of their lives, was a positive event to them, and so on, with one thing after another, all day long, until she went up to say good-night to them, and found them netted in their cots like birds among cherries and raspberries, still making up stories about some little bit of rubbish–something they had heard, something they had picked up in the garden. They all had their little treasures… And so she went down and said to her husband, Why must they grow up and lose it all? Never will they be so happy again. And he was angry. Why take such a gloomy view of life? he said. It is not sensible. For it was odd; and she believed it to be true; that with all his gloom and desperation he was happier, more hopeful on the

68. Julia Stephen sought better health for the poor, frequently visiting them, and wrote a book, Notes from Sick Rooms (1883).
69. Rose is partly based on Woolf's sister Vanessa Bell, the artist, as is Lily Briscoe.

whole, than she was. Less exposed to human worries–perhaps that was it. He had always his work to fall back on. Not that she herself was "pessimistic," as he accused her of being. Only she thought life–and a little strip of time presented itself to her eyes–her fifty years. There it was before her–life. Life, she thought–but she did not finish her thought. She took a look at life, for she had a clear sense of it there, something real, something private, which she shared neither with her children nor with her husband. A sort of transaction went on between them, in which she was on one side, and life was on another, and she was always trying to get the better of it, as it was of her; and sometimes they parleyed (when she sat alone); there were, she remembered, great reconciliation scenes; but for the most part, oddly enough, she must admit that she felt this thing that she called life terrible, hostile, and quick to pounce on you if you gave it a chance. There were eternal problems: suffering; death; the poor. There was always a woman dying of cancer even here. And yet she had said to all these children, You shall go through it all. To eight people she had said relentlessly that (and the bill for the greenhouse would be fifty pounds). For that reason, knowing what was before them–love and ambition and being wretched alone in dreary places–she had often the feeling, Why must they grow up and lose it all? And then she said to herself, brandishing her sword at life, Nonsense. They will be perfectly happy. And here she was, she reflected, feeling life rather sinister again, making Minta marry Paul Rayley; because whatever she might feel about her own transaction, she had had experiences which need not happen to every one (she did not name them to herself); she was driven on, too quickly she knew, almost as if it were an escape for her too, to say that people must marry; people must have children.

Was she wrong in this, she asked herself, reviewing her conduct for the past week or two, and wondering if she had indeed put any pressure upon Minta, who was only twenty-four, to make up her mind. She was uneasy. Had she not laughed about it? Was she not forgetting again how strongly she influenced people? Marriage needed–oh, all sorts of qualities (the bill for the greenhouse would be fifty pounds); one–she need not name it–that was essential; the thing she had with her husband. Had they that?

"Then he put on his trousers and ran away like a madman," she read. "But outside a great storm was raging and blowing so hard that he could scarcely keep his feet; houses and trees toppled over, the mountains trembled, rocks rolled into the sea, the sky was pitch black, and it thundered and lightened, and the sea came in with black waves as high as church towers and mountains, and all with white foam at the top."[70]

70. See note 52 on the fairy tale.

She turned the page; there were only a few lines more, so that she would finish the story, though it was past bed-time. It was getting late. The light in the garden told her that; and the whitening of the flowers and something grey in the leaves conspired together, to rouse in her a feeling of anxiety. What it was about she could not think at first. Then she remembered; Paul and Minta and Andrew had not come back. She summoned before her again the little group on the terrace in front of the hall door, standing looking up into the sky. Andrew had his net and basket. That meant he was going to catch crabs and things. That meant he would climb out on to a rock; he would be cut off. Or coming back single file on one of those little paths above the cliff one of them might slip. He would roll and then crash. It was growing quite dark.

But she did not let her voice change in the least as she finished the story, and added, shutting the book, and speaking the last words as if she had made them up herself, looking into James's eyes: "And there they are living still at this very time."

"And that's the end," she said, and she saw in his eyes, as the interest of the story died away in them, something else take its place; something wondering, pale, like the reflection of a light, which at once made him gaze and marvel. Turning, she looked across the bay, and there, sure enough, coming regularly across the waves first two quick strokes and then one long steady stroke, was the light of the Lighthouse. It had been lit.

In a moment he would ask her, "Are we going to the Lighthouse?" And she would have to say, "No: not tomorrow; your father says not." Happily, Mildred came in to fetch them, and the bustle distracted them. But he kept looking back over his shoulder as Mildred carried him out, and she was certain that he was thinking, we are not going to the Lighthouse tomorrow; and she thought, he will remember that all his life.

11

No, she thought, putting together some of the pictures he had cut out–a refrigerator, a mowing machine, a gentleman in evening dress–children never forget. For this reason, it was so important what one said, and what one did, and it was a relief when they went to bed. For now she need not think about anybody. She could be herself, by herself. And that was what now she often felt the need of–to think; well, not even to think. To be silent; to be alone. All the being and the doing, expansive, glittering, vocal, evaporated; and one shrunk, with a sense of solemnity, to being oneself, a wedge-shaped core of darkness, something invisible to others. Although she continued to

knit, and sat upright, it was thus that she felt herself; and this self having shed its attachments was free for the strangest adventures. When life sank down for a moment, the range of experience seemed limitless. And to everybody there was always this sense of unlimited resources, she supposed; one after another, she, Lily, Augustus Carmichael, must feel, our apparitions, the things you know us by, are simply childish. Beneath it is all dark, it is all spreading, it is unfathomably deep; but now and again we rise to the surface and that is what you see us by. Her horizon seemed to her limitless. There were all the places she had not seen; the Indian plains; she felt herself pushing aside the thick leather curtain of a church in Rome. This core of darkness could go anywhere, for no one saw it. They could not stop it, she thought, exulting. There was freedom, there was peace, there was, most welcome of all, a summoning together, a resting on a platform of stability. Not as oneself did one find rest ever, in her experience (she accomplished here something dexterous with her needles) but as a wedge of darkness. Losing personality, one lost the fret, the hurry, the stir; and there rose to her lips always some exclamation of triumph over life when things came together in this peace, this rest, this eternity; and pausing there she looked out to meet that stroke of the Lighthouse, the long steady stroke, the last of the three, which was her stroke, for watching them in this mood always at this hour one could not help attaching oneself to one thing especially of the things one saw; and this thing, the long steady stroke, was her stroke. Often she found herself sitting and looking, sitting and looking, with her work in her hands until she became the thing she looked at–that light, for example. And it would lift up on it some little phrase or other which had been lying in her mind like that–“Children don’t forget, children don’t forget”–which she would repeat and begin adding to it, It will end, it will end, she said. It will come, it will come, when suddenly she added, We are in the hands of the Lord.

But instantly she was annoyed with herself for saying that. Who had said it? Not she; she had been trapped into saying something she did not mean. She looked up over her knitting and met the third stroke and it seemed to her like her own eyes meeting her own eyes, searching as she alone could search into her mind and her heart, purifying out of existence that lie, any lie. She praised herself in praising the light, without vanity, for she was stern, she was searching, she was beautiful like that light. It was odd, she thought, how if one was alone, one leant to inanimate things; trees, streams, flowers; felt they expressed one; felt they became one; felt they knew one, in a sense were one; felt an irrational tenderness thus (she looked at that long steady light) as for oneself. There rose, and she looked and looked with her needles suspended, there curled up off the floor of the mind, rose from the lake of one’s being, a mist, a bride to meet her lover.

What brought her to say that: "We are in the hands of the Lord?" she wondered. The insincerity slipping in among the truths roused her, annoyed her. She returned to her knitting again. How could any Lord have made this world? she asked.[71] With her mind she had always seized the fact that there is no reason, order, justice: but suffering, death, the poor. There was no treachery too base for the world to commit; she knew that. No happiness lasted; she knew that. She knitted with firm composure, slightly pursing her lips and, without being aware of it, so stiffened and composed the lines of her face in a habit of sternness that when her husband passed, though he was chuckling at the thought that Hume, the philosopher, grown enormously fat, had stuck in a bog,[72] he could not help noting, as he passed, the sternness at the heart of her beauty. It saddened him, and her remoteness pained him, and he felt, as he passed, that he could not protect her, and, when he reached the hedge, he was sad. He could do nothing to help her. He must stand by and watch her. Indeed, the infernal truth was, he made things worse for her. He was irritable–he was touchy. He had lost his temper over the Lighthouse. He looked into the hedge, into its intricacy, its darkness.

Always, Mrs. Ramsay felt, one helped oneself out of solitude reluctantly by laying hold of some little odd or end, some sound, some sight. She listened, but it was all very still; cricket was over; the children were in their baths; there was only the sound of the sea. She stopped knitting; she held the long reddish-brown stocking dangling in her hands a moment. She saw the light again. With some irony in her interrogation, for when one woke at all, one's relations changed, she looked at the steady light, the pitiless, the remorseless, which was so much her, yet so little her, which had her at its beck and call (she woke in the night and saw it bent across their bed, stroking the floor), but for all that she thought, watching it with fascination, hypnotised, as if it were stroking with its silver fingers some sealed vessel in her brain whose bursting would flood her with delight, she had known happiness, exquisite happiness, intense happiness, and it silvered the rough waves a little more brightly, as daylight faded, and the blue went out of the sea and it rolled in waves of pure lemon which curved and swelled and broke upon the beach and the ecstasy burst in her eyes and waves of pure delight raced over the floor of her mind and she felt, It is enough! It is enough!

He turned and saw her. Ah! She was lovely, lovelier now than ever he thought. But he could not speak to her. He could not interrupt her. He wanted urgently to speak to her now that James was gone and she was

71. Julia Stephen became an atheist in adulthood, like her husband, which was fairly unusual for the time. See note 163 on Leslie Stephen.

72. A story about the famous atheist philosopher David Hume (1711-76), who had to recite the Lord's Prayer for a fish seller before she would pull him from the bog, which amused Leslie Stephen and his children.

alone at last. But he resolved, no; he would not interrupt her. She was aloof from him now in her beauty, in her sadness. He would let her be, and he passed her without a word, though it hurt him that she should look so distant, and he could not reach her, he could do nothing to help her. And again he would have passed her without a word had she not, at that very moment, given him of her own free will what she knew he would never ask, and called to him and taken the green shawl off the picture frame, and gone to him. For he wished, she knew, to protect her.

12

She folded the green shawl about her shoulders. She took his arm. His beauty was so great, she said, beginning to speak of Kennedy the gardener, at once he was so awfully handsome, that she couldn't dismiss him. There was a ladder against the greenhouse, and little lumps of putty stuck about, for they were beginning to mend the greenhouse. Yes, but as she strolled along with her husband, she felt that that particular source of worry had been placed. She had it on the tip of her tongue to say, as they strolled, "It'll cost fifty pounds," but instead, for her heart failed her about money, she talked about Jasper shooting birds, and he said, at once, soothing her instantly, that it was natural in a boy, and he trusted he would find better ways of amusing himself before long. Her husband was so sensible, so just. And so she said, "Yes; all children go through stages," and began considering the dahlias in the big bed, and wondering what about next year's flowers, and had he heard the children's nickname for Charles Tansley, she asked. The atheist, they called him, the little atheist. "He's not a polished specimen," said Mr. Ramsay. "Far from it," said Mrs. Ramsay.

She supposed it was all right leaving him to his own devices, Mrs. Ramsay said, wondering whether it was any use sending down bulbs; did they plant them? "Oh, he has his dissertation to write," said Mr. Ramsay. She knew all about *that*, said Mrs. Ramsay. He talked of nothing else. It was about the influence of somebody upon something. "Well, it's all he has to count on," said Mr. Ramsay. "Pray Heaven he won't fall in love with Prue," said Mrs. Ramsay. He'd disinherit her if she married him, said Mr. Ramsay. He did not look at the flowers, which his wife was considering, but at a spot about a foot or so above them. There was no harm in him, he added, and was just about to say that anyhow he was the only young man in England who admired his–when he choked it back. He would not bother her again about his books. These flowers seemed creditable, Mr. Ramsay said, lowering his gaze and noticing something red, something brown. Yes, but then these she had put in with her own hands, said Mrs. Ramsay. The question was, what happened if she sent bulbs down; did Kennedy plant

them? It was his incurable laziness; she added, moving on. If she stood over him all day long with a spade in her hand, he did sometimes do a stroke of work. So they strolled along, towards the red-hot pokers.[73] "You're teaching your daughters to exaggerate," said Mr. Ramsay, reproving her. Her Aunt Camilla was far worse than she was, Mrs. Ramsay remarked. "Nobody ever held up your Aunt Camilla as a model of virtue that I'm aware of," said Mr. Ramsay. "She was the most beautiful woman I ever saw," said Mrs. Ramsay. "Somebody else was that," said Mr. Ramsay. Prue was going to be far more beautiful than she was, said Mrs. Ramsay. He saw no trace of it, said Mr. Ramsay. "Well, then, look tonight," said Mrs. Ramsay. They paused. He wished Andrew could be induced to work harder. He would lose every chance of a scholarship if he didn't. "Oh, scholarships!" she said. Mr. Ramsay thought her foolish for saying that, about a serious thing, like a scholarship. He should be very proud of Andrew if he got a scholarship, he said. She would be just as proud of him if he didn't, she answered. They disagreed always about this, but it did not matter. She liked him to believe in scholarships, and he liked her to be proud of Andrew whatever he did. Suddenly she remembered those little paths on the edge of the cliffs.

Wasn't it late? she asked. They hadn't come home yet. He flicked his watch carelessly open. But it was only just past seven. He held his watch open for a moment, deciding that he would tell her what he had felt on the terrace. To begin with, it was not reasonable to be so nervous. Andrew could look after himself. Then, he wanted to tell her that when he was walking on the terrace just now–here he became uncomfortable, as if he were breaking into that solitude, that aloofness, that remoteness of hers. But she pressed him. What had he wanted to tell her, she asked, thinking it was about going to the Lighthouse; that he was sorry he had said "Damn you." But no. He did not like to see her look so sad, he said. Only wool gathering, she protested, flushing a little. They both felt uncomfortable, as if they did not know whether to go on or go back. She had been reading fairy tales to James, she said. No, they could not share that; they could not say that.

They had reached the gap between the two clumps of red-hot pokers[74], and there was the Lighthouse again, but she would not let herself look at it. Had she known that he was looking at her, she thought, she would not have let herself sit there, thinking. She disliked anything that reminded her that she had been seen sitting thinking. So she looked over her shoulder, at the town. The lights were rippling and running as if they were drops of silver water held firm in a wind. And all the poverty, all the suffering had turned to that, Mrs. Ramsay thought. The

73. Flowers; see note 28.
74. Flowers; see note 28.

lights of the town and of the harbour and of the boats seemed like a phantom net floating there to mark something which had sunk. Well, if he could not share her thoughts, Mr. Ramsay said to himself, he would be off, then, on his own. He wanted to go on thinking, telling himself the story how Hume was stuck in a bog[75]; he wanted to laugh. But first it was nonsense to be anxious about Andrew. When he was Andrew's age he used to walk about the country all day long, with nothing but a biscuit in his pocket and nobody bothered about him, or thought that he had fallen over a cliff. He said aloud he thought he would be off for a day's walk if the weather held. He had had about enough of Bankes and of Carmichael. He would like a little solitude. Yes, she said. It annoyed him that she did not protest. She knew that he would never do it. He was too old now to walk all day long with a biscuit in his pocket. She worried about the boys, but not about him. Years ago, before he had married, he thought, looking across the bay, as they stood between the clumps of red-hot pokers, he had walked all day. He had made a meal off bread and cheese in a public house. He had worked ten hours at a stretch; an old woman just popped her head in now and again and saw to the fire. That was the country he liked best, over there; those sandhills dwindling away into darkness. One could walk all day without meeting a soul. There was not a house scarcely, not a single village for miles on end. One could worry things out alone. There were little sandy beaches where no one had been since the beginning of time. The seals sat up and looked at you. It sometimes seemed to him that in a little house out there, alone–he broke off, sighing. He had no right. The father of eight children–he reminded himself. And he would have been a beast and a cur to wish a single thing altered. Andrew would be a better man than he had been. Prue would be a beauty, her mother said. They would stem the flood a bit. That was a good bit of work on the whole–his eight children. They showed he did not damn the poor little universe entirely, for on an evening like this, he thought, looking at the land dwindling away, the little island seemed pathetically small, half swallowed up in the sea.

"Poor little place," he murmured with a sigh.

She heard him. He said the most melancholy things, but she noticed that directly he had said them he always seemed more cheerful than usual. All this phrase-making was a game, she thought, for if she had said half what he said, she would have blown her brains out by now.

It annoyed her, this phrase-making, and she said to him, in a matter-of-fact way, that it was a perfectly lovely evening. And what was he groaning about, she asked, half laughing, half complaining, for she guessed what he was thinking–he would have written better books if he

75. See note 72.

had not married.

He was not complaining, he said. She knew that he did not complain. She knew that he had nothing whatever to complain of. And he seized her hand and raised it to his lips and kissed it with an intensity that brought the tears to her eyes, and quickly he dropped it.

They turned away from the view and began to walk up the path where the silver-green spear-like plants grew, arm in arm. His arm was almost like a young man's arm, Mrs. Ramsay thought, thin and hard, and she thought with delight how strong he still was, though he was over sixty, and how untamed and optimistic, and how strange it was that being convinced, as he was, of all sorts of horrors, seemed not to depress him, but to cheer him. Was it not odd, she reflected? Indeed he seemed to her sometimes made differently from other people, born blind, deaf, and dumb, to the ordinary things, but to the extraordinary things, with an eye like an eagle's. His understanding often astonished her. But did he notice the flowers? No. Did he notice the view? No. Did he even notice his own daughter's beauty, or whether there was pudding on his plate or roast beef? He would sit at table with them like a person in a dream. And his habit of talking aloud, or saying poetry aloud, was growing on him, she was afraid; for sometimes it was awkward–

Best and brightest come away![76]

poor Miss Giddings, when he shouted that at her, almost jumped out of her skin. But then, Mrs. Ramsay, though instantly taking his side against all the silly Giddingses in the world, then, she thought, intimating by a little pressure on his arm that he walked up hill too fast for her, and she must stop for a moment to see whether those were fresh molehills on the bank, then, she thought, stooping down to look, a great mind like his must be different in every way from ours. All the great men she had ever known, she thought, deciding that a rabbit must have got in, were like that, and it was good for young men (though the atmosphere of lecture-rooms was stuffy and depressing to her beyond endurance almost) simply to hear him, simply to look at him. But without shooting rabbits, how was one to keep them down? she wondered. It might be a rabbit; it might be a mole. Some creature anyhow was ruining her Evening Primroses. And looking up, she saw above the thin trees the first pulse of the full-throbbing star, and wanted to make her husband look at it; for the sight gave her such keen pleasure. But she stopped herself. He never looked at things. If he did, all he

76. A line from Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem, "To Jane – The Invitation" (1811).

would say would be, Poor little world, with one of his sighs.

At that moment, he said, “Very fine,” to please her, and pretended to admire the flowers. But she knew quite well that he did not admire them, or even realise that they were there. It was only to please her. Ah, but was that not Lily Briscoe strolling along with William Bankes? She focussed her short-sighted eyes upon the backs of a retreating couple. Yes, indeed it was. Did that not mean that they would marry? Yes, it must! What an admirable idea! They must marry!

13

He had been to Amsterdam, Mr. Bankes was saying as he strolled across the lawn with Lily Briscoe. He had seen the Rembrandts.[77] He had been to Madrid. Unfortunately, it was Good Friday and the Prado[78] was shut. He had been to Rome. Had Miss Briscoe never been to Rome? Oh, she should–It would be a wonderful experience for her–the Sistine Chapel; Michael Angelo;[79] and Padua, with its Giottos[80]. His wife had been in bad health for many years, so that their sight-seeing had been on a modest scale.

She had been to Brussels; she had been to Paris but only for a flying visit to see an aunt who was ill. She had been to Dresden; there were masses of pictures she had not seen; however, Lily Briscoe reflected, perhaps it was better not to see pictures: they only made one hopelessly discontented with one’s own work. Mr. Bankes thought one could carry that point of view too far. We can’t all be Titians[81] and we can’t all be Darwins[82], he said; at the same time he doubted whether you could have your Darwin and your Titian if it weren’t for humble people like ourselves. Lily would have liked to pay him a compliment; you’re not humble, Mr. Bankes, she would have liked to have said. But he did not want compliments (most men do, she thought), and she was a little ashamed of her impulse and said nothing while he remarked that perhaps what he was saying did not apply to pictures. Anyhow, said Lily, tossing off her little insincerity, she would always go on painting, because it interested her. Yes, said Mr. Bankes, he was sure she would, and, as they reached the end of the lawn he was asking her whether she had difficulty in finding subjects in London when they turned and saw the Ramsays. So that is marriage, Lily thought, a man and a woman looking at a girl throwing a ball. That is what Mrs. Ramsay tried to tell me the other night, she thought. For she was wearing a green

77. Rembrandt van Rijn (1506-1669), Dutch Renaissance painter.
78. The national Spanish art museum.
79. Michelangelo. See note 44.
80. Giotto di Bondone (1266/7 – 1337), the best-known Italian painter and architect of the very early Renaissance.
81. Tiziano Vecellio (c. 1485 – 1576), known in English as Titian, a great Venetian artist.
82. Charles Darwin (1809-82), who first postulated the theory of evolution. Leslie Stephen was one of the first in England to accept his ideas.

shawl, and they were standing close together watching Prue and Jasper throwing catches. And suddenly the meaning which, for no reason at all, as perhaps they are stepping out of the Tube[83] or ringing a doorbell, descends on people, making them symbolical, making them representative, came upon them, and made them in the dusk standing, looking, the symbols of marriage, husband and wife. Then, after an instant, the symbolical outline which transcended the real figures sank down again, and they became, as they met them, Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay watching the children throwing catches. But still for a moment, though Mrs. Ramsay greeted them with her usual smile (oh, she's thinking we're going to get married, Lily thought) and said, "I have triumphed tonight," meaning that for once Mr. Bankes had agreed to dine with them and not run off to his own lodging where his man cooked vegetables properly; still, for one moment, there was a sense of things having been blown apart, of space, of irresponsibility as the ball soared high, and they followed it and lost it and saw the one star and the draped branches. In the failing light they all looked sharp-edged and ethereal and divided by great distances. Then, darting backwards over the vast space (for it seemed as if solidity had vanished altogether), Prue ran full tilt into them and caught the ball brilliantly high up in her left hand, and her mother said, "Haven't they come back yet?" whereupon the spell was broken. Mr. Ramsay felt free now to laugh out loud at the thought that Hume had stuck in a bog and an old woman rescued him on condition he said the Lord's Prayer,[84] and chuckling to himself he strolled off to his study. Mrs. Ramsay, bringing Prue back into throwing catches again, from which she had escaped, asked,

"Did Nancy go with them?"

14

(Certainly, Nancy had gone with them, since Minta Doyle had asked it with her dumb look, holding out her hand, as Nancy made off, after lunch, to her attic, to escape the horror of family life. She supposed she must go then. She did not want to go. She did not want to be drawn into it all. For as they walked along the road to the cliff Minta kept on taking her hand. Then she would let it go. Then she would take it again. What was it she wanted? Nancy asked herself. There was something, of course, that people wanted; for when Minta took her hand and held it, Nancy, reluctantly, saw the whole world spread out beneath her, as if it were Constantinople[85] seen through a mist, and then, however heavy-eyed one might be, one must needs ask, "Is that

83. The London subway.
84. See note 72.
85. The Byzantine and ancient Roman name for Istanbul.

Santa Sofia[86]?" "Is that the Golden Horn[87]?" So Nancy asked, when Minta took her hand. "What is it that she wants? Is it that?" And what was that? Here and there emerged from the mist (as Nancy looked down upon life spread beneath her) a pinnacle, a dome; prominent things, without names. But when Minta dropped her hand, as she did when they ran down the hillside, all that, the dome, the pinnacle, whatever it was that had protruded through the mist, sank down into it and disappeared. Minta, Andrew observed, was rather a good walker. She wore more sensible clothes that most women. She wore very short skirts and black knickerbockers. She would jump straight into a stream and flounder across. He liked her rashness, but he saw that it would not do–she would kill herself in some idiotic way one of these days. She seemed to be afraid of nothing–except bulls. At the mere sight of a bull in a field she would throw up her arms and fly screaming, which was the very thing to enrage a bull of course. But she did not mind owning up to it in the least; one must admit that. She knew she was an awful coward about bulls, she said. She thought she must have been tossed in her perambulator[88] when she was a baby. She didn't seem to mind what she said or did. Suddenly now she pitched down on the edge of the cliff and began to sing some song about

Damn your eyes, damn your eyes.

They all had to join in and sing the chorus, and shout out together:

Damn your eyes, damn your eyes,[89]

but it would be fatal to let the tide come in and cover up all the good hunting-grounds before they got on to the beach.

"Fatal," Paul agreed, springing up, and as they went slithering down, he kept quoting the guide-book about "these islands being justly celebrated for their park-like prospects and the extent and variety of their marine curiosities." But it would not do altogether, this shouting and damning your eyes, Andrew felt, picking his way down the cliff, this clapping him on the back, and calling him "old fellow" and all that; it would not altogether do. It was the worst of taking women on walks. Once on the beach they separated, he going out on to the

86. Also known as Hagia Sofia, a landmark church that became a mosque and is now a museum.
87. An inlet forming a harbour in Istanbul.
88. Baby carriage.
89. Music-hall lyrics, the pop music of Victorian times.

Pope's Nose[90], taking his shoes off, and rolling his socks in them and letting that couple look after themselves; Nancy waded out to her own rocks and searched her own pools and let that couple look after themselves. She crouched low down and touched the smooth rubber-like sea anemones, who were stuck like lumps of jelly to the side of the rock. Brooding, she changed the pool into the sea, and made the minnows into sharks and whales, and cast vast clouds over this tiny world by holding her hand against the sun, and so brought darkness and desolation, like God himself, to millions of ignorant and innocent creatures, and then took her hand away suddenly and let the sun stream down. Out on the pale criss-crossed sand, high-stepping, fringed, gauntleted, stalked some fantastic leviathan (she was still enlarging the pool), and slipped into the vast fissures of the mountain side. And then, letting her eyes slide imperceptibly above the pool and rest on that wavering line of sea and sky, on the tree trunks which the smoke of steamers made waver on the horizon, she became with all that power sweeping savagely in and inevitably withdrawing, hypnotised, and the two senses of that vastness and this tininess (the pool had diminished again) flowering within it made her feel that she was bound hand and foot and unable to move by the intensity of feelings which reduced her own body, her own life, and the lives of all the people in the world, for ever, to nothingness. So listening to the waves, crouching over the pool, she brooded.

And Andrew shouted that the sea was coming in, so she leapt splashing through the shallow waves on to the shore and ran up the beach and was carried by her own impetuosity and her desire for rapid movement right behind a rock and there–oh, heavens! in each other's arms, were Paul and Minta kissing probably. She was outraged, indignant. She and Andrew put on their shoes and stockings in dead silence without saying a thing about it. Indeed they were rather sharp with each other. She might have called him when she saw the crayfish or whatever it was, Andrew grumbled. However, they both felt, it's not our fault. They had not wanted this horrid nuisance to happen. All the same it irritated Andrew that Nancy should be a woman, and Nancy that Andrew should be a man, and they tied their shoes very neatly and drew the bows rather tight.

It was not until they had climbed right up on to the top of the cliff again that Minta cried out that she had lost her grandmother's brooch–her grandmother's brooch, the sole ornament she possessed–a weeping willow, it was (they must remember it) set in pearls. They must have seen it, she said, with the tears running down her cheeks, the brooch which her grandmother had fastened her cap with till the last day of her life. Now she had lost it. She would rather have

90. Intended to mean a point of land.

lost anything than that! She would go back and look for it. They all went back. They poked and peered and looked. They kept their heads very low, and said things shortly and gruffly. Paul Rayley searched like a madman all about the rock where they had been sitting. All this pother about a brooch really didn't do at all, Andrew thought, as Paul told him to make a "thorough search between this point and that." The tide was coming in fast. The sea would cover the place where they had sat in a minute. There was not a ghost of a chance of their finding it now. "We shall be cut off!" Minta shrieked, suddenly terrified. As if there were any danger of that! It was the same as the bulls all over again–she had no control over her emotions, Andrew thought. Women hadn't. The wretched Paul had to pacify her. The men (Andrew and Paul at once became manly, and different from usual) took counsel briefly and decided that they would plant Rayley's stick where they had sat and come back at low tide again. There was nothing more that could be done now. If the brooch was there, it would still be there in the morning, they assured her, but Minta still sobbed, all the way up to the top of the cliff. It was her grandmother's brooch; she would rather have lost anything but that, and yet Nancy felt, it might be true that she minded losing her brooch, but she wasn't crying only for that. She was crying for something else. We might all sit down and cry, she felt. But she did not know what for.

They drew ahead together, Paul and Minta, and he comforted her, and said how famous he was for finding things. Once when he was a little boy he had found a gold watch. He would get up at daybreak and he was positive he would find it. It seemed to him that it would be almost dark, and he would be alone on the beach, and somehow it would be rather dangerous. He began telling her, however, that he would certainly find it, and she said that she would not hear of his getting up at dawn: it was lost: she knew that: she had had a presentiment when she put it on that afternoon. And secretly he resolved that he would not tell her, but he would slip out of the house at dawn when they were all asleep and if he could not find it he would go to Edinburgh[91] and buy her another, just like it but more beautiful. He would prove what he could do. And as they came out on the hill and saw the lights of the town beneath them, the lights coming out suddenly one by one seemed like things that were going to happen to him–his marriage, his children, his house; and again he thought, as they came out on to the high road, which was shaded with high bushes, how they would retreat into solitude together, and walk on and on, he always leading her, and she pressing close to his side (as she did now). As they turned by the cross roads he thought what an appalling experience he had been through, and he must tell some one–Mrs. Ramsay of course, for it took

91. A city in Scotland. Woolf admitted that her knowledge of Scottish geography was lacking; critics have noted that the city of Glasgow would be much nearer to the island the characters are supposed to be on.

his breath away to think what he had been and done. It had been far and away the worst moment of his life when he asked Minta to marry him. He would go straight to Mrs. Ramsay, because he felt somehow that she was the person who had made him do it. She had made him think he could do anything. Nobody else took him seriously. But she made him believe that he could do whatever he wanted. He had felt her eyes on him all day today, following him about (though she never said a word) as if she were saying, "Yes, you can do it. I believe in you. I expect it of you." She had made him feel all that, and directly they got back (he looked for the lights of the house above the bay) he would go to her and say, "I've done it, Mrs. Ramsay; thanks to you." And so turning into the lane that led to the house he could see lights moving about in the upper windows. They must be awfully late then. People were getting ready for dinner. The house was all lit up, and the lights after the darkness made his eyes feel full, and he said to himself, childishly, as he walked up the drive, Lights, lights, lights, and repeated in a dazed way, Lights, lights, lights, as they came into the house staring about him with his face quite stiff. But, good heavens, he said to himself, putting his hand to his tie, I must not make a fool of myself.)[92]

15

"Yes," said Prue, in her considering way, answering her mother's question, "I think Nancy did go with them."

16

Well then, Nancy had gone with them, Mrs. Ramsay supposed, wondering, as she put down a brush, took up a comb, and said "Come in" to a tap at the door (Jasper and Rose came in), whether the fact that Nancy was with them made it less likely or more likely that anything would happen; it made it less likely, somehow, Mrs. Ramsay felt, very irrationally, except that after all holocaust on such a scale was not probable. They could not all be drowned. And again she felt alone in the presence of her old antagonist, life.

Jasper and Rose said that Mildred wanted to know whether she should wait dinner.

"Not for the Queen of England," said Mrs. Ramsay emphatically.

92. This chapter, like Part Two, "Time Passes," is in parentheses as an indication that its events go on in the background.

"Not for the Empress of Mexico," she added, laughing at Jasper; for he shared his mother's vice: he, too, exaggerated.

And if Rose liked, she said, while Jasper took the message, she might choose which jewels she was to wear. When there are fifteen people sitting down to dinner, one cannot keep things waiting for ever. She was now beginning to feel annoyed with them for being so late; it was inconsiderate of them, and it annoyed her on top of her anxiety about them, that they should choose this very night to be out late, when, in fact, she wished the dinner to be particularly nice, since William Bankes had at last consented to dine with them; and they were having Mildred's masterpiece—Boeuf en Daube.[93] Everything depended upon things being served up to the precise moment they were ready. The beef, the bayleaf, and the wine–all must be done to a turn. To keep it waiting was out of the question. Yet of course tonight, of all nights, out they went, and they came in late, and things had to be sent out, things had to be kept hot; the Boeuf en Daube would be entirely spoilt.

Jasper offered her an opal necklace; Rose a gold necklace. Which looked best against her black dress? Which did indeed, said Mrs. Ramsay absent-mindedly, looking at her neck and shoulders (but avoiding her face) in the glass. And then, while the children rummaged among her things, she looked out of the window at a sight which always amused her–the rooks trying to decide which tree to settle on. Every time, they seemed to change their minds and rose up into the air again, because, she thought, the old rook, the father rook, old Joseph was her name for him, was a bird of a very trying and difficult disposition. He was a disreputable old bird, with half his wing feathers missing. He was like some seedy old gentleman in a top hat she had seen playing the horn in front of a public house.

"Look!" she said, laughing. They were actually fighting. Joseph and Mary[94] were fighting. Anyhow they all went up again, and the air was shoved aside by their black wings and cut into exquisite scimitar shapes. The movements of the wings beating out, out, out–she could never describe it accurately enough to please herself–was one of the loveliest of all to her. Look at that, she said to Rose, hoping that Rose would see it more clearly than she could. For one's children so often gave one's own perceptions a little thrust forwards.

But which was it to be? They had all the trays of her jewel-case open. The gold necklace, which was Italian, or the opal necklace, which Uncle James had brought her from India; or should she wear her

93. A French beef stew in which the meat is braised with herbs, wine, olives, and vegetables.
94. Note the reference to Jesus Christ's parents.

amethysts?

"Choose, dearests, choose," she said, hoping that they would make haste.

But she let them take their time to choose: she let Rose, particularly, take up this and then that, and hold her jewels against the black dress, for this little ceremony of choosing jewels, which was gone through every night, was what Rose liked best, she knew. She had some hidden reason of her own for attaching great importance to this choosing what her mother was to wear. What was the reason, Mrs. Ramsay wondered, standing still to let her clasp the necklace she had chosen, divining, through her own past, some deep, some buried, some quite speechless feeling that one had for one's mother at Rose's age. Like all feelings felt for oneself, Mrs. Ramsay thought, it made one sad. It was so inadequate, what one could give in return; and what Rose felt was quite out of proportion to anything she actually was. And Rose would grow up; and Rose would suffer, she supposed, with these deep feelings, and she said she was ready now, and they would go down, and Jasper, because he was the gentleman, should give her his arm, and Rose, as she was the lady, should carry her handkerchief (she gave her the handkerchief), and what else? oh, yes, it might be cold: a shawl. Choose me a shawl, she said, for that would please Rose, who was bound to suffer so. "There," she said, stopping by the window on the landing, "there they are again." Joseph had settled on another tree-top. "Don't you think they mind," she said to Jasper, "having their wings broken?" Why did he want to shoot poor old Joseph and Mary? He shuffled a little on the stairs, and felt rebuked, but not seriously, for she did not understand the fun of shooting birds; and they did not feel; and being his mother she lived away in another division of the world, but he rather liked her stories about Mary and Joseph. She made him laugh. But how did she know that those were Mary and Joseph? Did she think the same birds came to the same trees every night? he asked. But here, suddenly, like all grown-up people, she ceased to pay him the least attention. She was listening to a clatter in the hall.

"They've come back!" she exclaimed, and at once she felt much more annoyed with them than relieved. Then she wondered, had it happened? She would go down and they would tell her–but no. They could not tell her anything, with all these people about. So she must go down and begin dinner and wait. And, like some queen who, finding her people gathered in the hall, looks down upon them, and descends among them, and acknowledges their tributes silently, and accepts their devotion and their prostration before her (Paul did not move a muscle but looked straight before him as she passed) she went down, and crossed the hall and bowed her head very slightly, as if she accepted what they could not say: their tribute to her beauty.

But she stopped. There was a smell of burning. Could they have let the Boeuf en Daube overboil? she wondered, pray heaven not! when the great clangour of the gong announced solemnly, authoritatively, that all those scattered about, in attics, in bedrooms, on little perches of their own, reading, writing, putting the last smooth to their hair, or fastening dresses, must leave all that, and the little odds and ends on their washing-tables and dressing tables, and the novels on the bed-tables, and the diaries which were so private, and assemble in the dining-room for dinner.

17

But what have I done with my life? thought Mrs. Ramsay, taking her place at the head of the table, and looking at all the plates making white circles on it. “William, sit by me,” she said. “Lily,” she said, wearily, “over there.” They had that–Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle–she, only this–an infinitely long table and plates and knives. At the far end was her husband, sitting down, all in a heap, frowning. What at? She did not know. She did not mind. She could not understand how she had ever felt any emotion or affection for him. She had a sense of being past everything, through everything, out of everything, as she helped the soup, as if there was an eddy–there– and one could be in it, or one could be out of it, and she was out of it. It’s all come to an end, she thought, while they came in one after another, Charles Tansley–“Sit there, please,” she said–Augustus Carmichael–and sat down. And meanwhile she waited, passively, for some one to answer her, for something to happen. But this is not a thing, she thought, ladling out soup, that one says.

Raising her eyebrows at the discrepancy–that was what she was thinking, this was what she was doing–ladling out soup–she felt, more and more strongly, outside that eddy; or as if a shade had fallen, and, robbed of colour, she saw things truly. The room (she looked round it) was very shabby. There was no beauty anywhere. She forebore to look at Mr. Tansley. Nothing seemed to have merged. They all sat separate. And the whole of the effort of merging and flowing and creating rested on her. Again she felt, as a fact without hostility, the sterility of men, for if she did not do it nobody would do it, and so, giving herself a little shake that one gives a watch that has stopped, the old familiar pulse began beating, as the watch begins ticking–one, two, three, one, two, three. And so on and so on, she repeated, listening to it, sheltering and fostering the still feeble pulse as one might guard a weak flame with a news-paper. And so then, she concluded, addressing herself by bending silently in his direction to William

Bankes–poor man! who had no wife, and no children and dined alone in lodgings except for tonight; and in pity for him, life being now strong enough to bear her on again, she began all this business, as a sailor not without weariness sees the wind fill his sail and yet hardly wants to be off again and thinks how, had the ship sunk, he would have whirled round and round and found rest on the floor of the sea.

"Did you find your letters? I told them to put them in the hall for you," she said to William Bankes.

Lily Briscoe watched her drifting into that strange no-man's land where to follow people is impossible and yet their going inflicts such a chill on those who watch them that they always try at least to follow them with their eyes as one follows a fading ship until the sails have sunk beneath the horizon.

How old she looks, how worn she looks, Lily thought, and how remote. Then when she turned to William Bankes, smiling, it was as if the ship had turned and the sun had struck its sails again, and Lily thought with some amusement because she was relieved, Why does she pity him? For that was the impression she gave, when she told him that his letters were in the hall. Poor William Bankes, she seemed to be saying, as if her own weariness had been partly pitying people, and the life in her, her resolve to live again, had been stirred by pity. And it was not true, Lily thought; it was one of those misjudgments of hers that seemed to be instinctive and to arise from some need of her own rather than of other people's. He is not in the least pitiable. He has his work, Lily said to herself. She remembered, all of a sudden as if she had found a treasure, that she had her work. In a flash she saw her picture, and thought, Yes, I shall put the tree further in the middle; then I shall avoid that awkward space. That's what I shall do. That's what has been puzzling me. She took up the salt cellar and put it down again on a flower pattern in the table-cloth, so as to remind herself to move the tree.

"It's odd that one scarcely gets anything worth having by post, yet one always wants one's letters," said Mr. Bankes.

What damned rot they talk, thought Charles Tansley, laying down his spoon precisely in the middle of his plate, which he had swept clean, as if, Lily thought (he sat opposite to her with his back to the window precisely in the middle of view), he were determined to make sure of his meals. Everything about him had that meagre fixity, that bare unloveliness. But nevertheless, the fact remained, it was impossible to dislike any one if one looked at them. She liked his eyes; they were blue, deep set, frightening.

“Do you write many letters, Mr. Tansley?” asked Mrs. Ramsay, pitying him too, Lily supposed; for that was true of Mrs. Ramsay–she pitied men always as if they lacked something–women never, as if they had something. He wrote to his mother; otherwise he did not suppose he wrote one letter a month, said Mr. Tansley, shortly.

For he was not going to talk the sort of rot these condescended to by these silly women. He had been reading in his room, and now he came down and it all seemed to him silly, superficial, flimsy. Why did they dress? He had come down in his ordinary clothes. He had not got any dress clothes. “One never gets anything worth having by post”–that was the sort of thing they were always saying. They made men say that sort of thing. Yes, it was pretty well true, he thought. They never got anything worth having from one year’s end to another. They did nothing but talk, talk, talk, eat, eat, eat. It was the women’s fault. Women made civilisation impossible with all their “charm,” all their silliness.

“No going to the Lighthouse tomorrow, Mrs. Ramsay,” he said, asserting himself. He liked her; he admired her; he still thought of the man in the drain-pipe looking up at her; but he felt it necessary to assert himself.

He was really, Lily Briscoe thought, in spite of his eyes, but then look at his nose, look at his hands, the most uncharming human being she had ever met. Then why did she mind what he said? Women can’t write, women can’t paint–what did that matter coming from him, since clearly it was not true to him but for some reason helpful to him, and that was why he said it? Why did her whole being bow, like corn under a wind, and erect itself again from this abasement only with a great and rather painful effort? She must make it once more. There’s the sprig on the table-cloth; there’s my painting; I must move the tree to the middle; that matters–nothing else. Could she not hold fast to that, she asked herself, and not lose her temper, and not argue; and if she wanted revenge take it by laughing at him?

“Oh, Mr. Tansley,” she said, “do take me to the Lighthouse with you. I should so love it.”

She was telling lies he could see. She was saying what she did not mean to annoy him, for some reason. She was laughing at him. He was in his old flannel trousers. He had no others. He felt very rough and isolated and lonely. He knew that she was trying to tease him for some reason; she didn’t want to go to the Lighthouse with him; she despised him: so did Prue Ramsay; so did they all. But he was not going to be made a fool of by women, so he turned deliberately in his chair and looked out of the window and said, all in a jerk, very rudely, it would

be too rough for her tomorrow. She would be sick.

It annoyed him that she should have made him speak like that, with Mrs. Ramsay listening. If only he could be alone in his room working, he thought, among his books. That was where he felt at his ease. And he had never run a penny into debt; he had never cost his father a penny since he was fifteen; he had helped them at home out of his savings; he was educating his sister. Still, he wished he had known how to answer Miss Briscoe properly; he wished it had not come out all in a jerk like that. "You'd be sick." He wished he could think of something to say to Mrs. Ramsay, something which would show her that he was not just a dry prig. That was what they all thought him. He turned to her. But Mrs. Ramsay was talking about people he had never heard of to William Bankes.

"Yes, take it away," she said briefly, interrupting what she was saying to William Bankes to speak to the maid. "It must have been fifteen–no, twenty years ago–that I last saw her," she was saying, turning back to him again as if she could not lose a moment of their talk, for she was absorbed by what they were saying. So he had actually heard from her this evening! And was Carrie still living at Marlow[95], and was everything still the same? Oh, she could remember it as if it were yesterday–on the river, feeling it as if it were yesterday–going on the river, feeling very cold. But if the Mannings made a plan they stuck to it. Never should she forget Herbert killing a wasp with a teaspoon on the bank! And it was still going on, Mrs. Ramsay mused, gliding like a ghost among the chairs and tables of that drawing-room on the banks of the Thames where she had been so very, very cold twenty years ago; but now she went among them like a ghost; and it fascinated her, as if, while she had changed, that particular day, now become very still and beautiful, had remained there, all these years. Had Carrie written to him herself? she asked.

"Yes. She says they're building a new billiard room," he said. No! No! That was out of the question! Building a new billiard room! It seemed to her impossible.

Mr. Bankes could not see that there was anything very odd about it. They were very well off now. Should he give her love to Carrie?

"Oh," said Mrs. Ramsay with a little start, "No," she added, reflecting that she did not know this Carrie who built a new billiard room. But how strange, she repeated, to Mr. Bankes's amusement, that they should be going on there still. For it was extraordinary to think that they had been capable of going on living all these years when she had not

95. A town in Buckinghamshire, England.

thought of them more than once all that time. How eventful her own life had been, during those same years. Yet perhaps Carrie Manning had not thought about her, either. The thought was strange and distasteful.

“People soon drift apart,” said Mr. Bankes, feeling, however, some satisfaction when he thought that after all he knew both the Mannings and the Ramsays. He had not drifted apart he thought, laying down his spoon and wiping his clean-shaven lips punctiliously. But perhaps he was rather unusual, he thought, in this; he never let himself get into a groove. He had friends in all circles… Mrs. Ramsay had to break off here to tell the maid something about keeping food hot. That was why he preferred dining alone. All those interruptions annoyed him. Well, thought William Bankes, preserving a demeanour of exquisite courtesy and merely spreading the fingers of his left hand on the table-cloth as a mechanic examines a tool beautifully polished and ready for use in an interval of leisure, such are the sacrifices one’s friends ask of one. It would have hurt her if he had refused to come. But it was not worth it for him. Looking at his hand he thought that if he had been alone dinner would have been almost over now; he would have been free to work. Yes, he thought, it is a terrible waste of time. The children were dropping in still. “I wish one of you would run up to Roger’s room,” Mrs. Ramsay was saying. How trifling it all is, how boring it all is, he thought, compared with the other thing–work. Here he sat drumming his fingers on the table-cloth when he might have been–he took a flashing bird’s-eye view of his work. What a waste of time it all was to be sure! Yet, he thought, she is one of my oldest friends. I am by way of being devoted to her. Yet now, at this moment her presence meant absolutely nothing to him: her beauty meant nothing to him; her sitting with her little boy at the window–nothing, nothing. He wished only to be alone and to take up that book. He felt uncomfortable; he felt treacherous, that he could sit by her side and feel nothing for her. The truth was that he did not enjoy family life. It was in this sort of state that one asked oneself, What does one live for? Why, one asked oneself, does one take all these pains for the human race to go on? Is it so very desirable? Are we attractive as a species? Not so very, he thought, looking at those rather untidy boys. His favourite, Cam, was in bed, he supposed. Foolish questions, vain questions, questions one never asked if one was occupied. Is human life this? Is human life that? One never had time to think about it. But here he was asking himself that sort of question, because Mrs. Ramsay was giving orders to servants, and also because it had struck him, thinking how surprised Mrs. Ramsay was that Carrie Manning should still exist, that friendships, even the best of them, are frail things. One drifts apart. He reproached himself again. He was sitting beside Mrs. Ramsay and he had nothing in the world to say to her.

"I'm so sorry," said Mrs. Ramsay, turning to him at last. He felt rigid and barren, like a pair of boots that have been soaked and gone dry so that you can hardly force your feet into them. Yet he must force his feet into them. He must make himself talk. Unless he were very careful, she would find out this treachery of his; that he did not care a straw for her, and that would not be at all pleasant, he thought. So he bent his head courteously in her direction.

"How you must detest dining in this bear garden," she said, making use, as she did when she was distracted, of her social manner. So, when there is a strife of tongues, at some meeting, the chairman, to obtain unity, suggests that every one shall speak in French. Perhaps it is bad French; French may not contain the words that express the speaker's thoughts; nevertheless speaking French imposes some order, some uniformity. Replying to her in the same language, Mr. Bankes said, "No, not at all," and Mr. Tansley, who had no knowledge of this language, even spoke thus in words of one syllable, at once suspected its insincerity. They did talk nonsense, he thought, the Ramsays; and he pounced on this fresh instance with joy, making a note which, one of these days, he would read aloud, to one or two friends. There, in a society where one could say what one liked he would sarcastically describe "staying with the Ramsays" and what nonsense they talked. It was worth while doing it once, he would say; but not again. The women bored one so, he would say. Of course Ramsay had dished himself[96] by marrying a beautiful woman and having eight children. It would shape itself something like that, but now, at this moment, sitting stuck there with an empty seat beside him, nothing had shaped itself at all. It was all in scraps and fragments. He felt extremely, even physically, uncomfortable. He wanted somebody to give him a chance of asserting himself. He wanted it so urgently that he fidgeted in his chair, looked at this person, then at that person, tried to break into their talk, opened his mouth and shut it again. They were talking about the fishing industry. Why did no one ask him his opinion? What did they know about the fishing industry?

Lily Briscoe knew all that. Sitting opposite him, could she not see, as in an X-ray photograph, the ribs and thigh bones of the young man's desire to impress himself, lying dark in the mist of his flesh–that thin mist which convention had laid over his burning desire to break into the conversation? But, she thought, screwing up her Chinese eyes, and remembering how he sneered at women, "can't paint, can't write," why should I help him to relieve himself?

There is a code of behaviour, she knew, whose seventh article (it may

96. Cheated or frustrated himself.

be) says that on occasions of this sort it behoves the woman, whatever her own occupation might be, to go to the help of the young man opposite so that he may expose and relieve the thigh bones, the ribs, of his vanity, of his urgent desire to assert himself; as indeed it is their duty, she reflected, in her old maidenly fairness, to help us, suppose the Tube[97] were to burst into flames. Then, she thought, I should certainly expect Mr. Tansley to get me out. But how would it be, she thought, if neither of us did either of these things? So she sat there smiling.

"You're not planning to go to the Lighthouse, are you, Lily," said Mrs. Ramsay. "Remember poor Mr. Langley; he had been round the world dozens of times, but he told me he never suffered as he did when my husband took him there. Are you a good sailor, Mr. Tansley?" she asked.

Mr. Tansley raised a hammer: swung it high in air; but realising, as it descended, that he could not smite that butterfly with such an instrument as this, said only that he had never been sick in his life. But in that one sentence lay compact, like gunpowder, that his grandfather was a fisherman; his father a chemist; that he had worked his way up entirely himself; that he was proud of it; that he was Charles Tansley–a fact that nobody there seemed to realise; but one of these days every single person would know it. He scowled ahead of him. He could almost pity these mild cultivated people, who would be blown sky high, like bales of wool and barrels of apples, one of these days by the gunpowder that was in him.

"Will you take me, Mr. Tansley?" said Lily, quickly, kindly, for, of course, if Mrs. Ramsay said to her, as in effect she did, "I am drowning, my dear, in seas of fire. Unless you apply some balm to the anguish of this hour and say something nice to that young man there, life will run upon the rocks–indeed I hear the grating and the growling at this minute. My nerves are taut as fiddle strings. Another touch and they will snap"–when Mrs. Ramsay said all this, as the glance in her eyes said it, of course for the hundred and fiftieth time Lily Briscoe had to renounce the experiment–what happens if one is not nice to that young man there–and be nice.

Judging the turn in her mood correctly–that she was friendly to him now–he was relieved of his egotism, and told her how he had been thrown out of a boat when he was a baby; how his father used to fish him out with a boat-hook; that was how he had learnt to swim. One of his uncles kept the light on some rock or other off the Scottish coast, he said. He had been there with him in a storm. This was said loudly in a pause. They had to listen to him when he said that he had been

97. The London subway.

with his uncle in a lighthouse in a storm. Ah, thought Lily Briscoe, as the conversation took this auspicious turn, and she felt Mrs. Ramsay's gratitude (for Mrs. Ramsay was free now to talk for a moment herself), ah, she thought, but what haven't I paid to get it for you? She had not been sincere.

She had done the usual trick–been nice. She would never know him. He would never know her. Human relations were all like that, she thought, and the worst (if it had not been for Mr. Bankes) were between men and women. Inevitably these were extremely insincere she thought. Then her eye caught the salt cellar, which she had placed there to remind her, and she remembered that next morning she would move the tree further towards the middle, and her spirits rose so high at the thought of painting tomorrow that she laughed out loud at what Mr. Tansley was saying. Let him talk all night if he liked it.

"But how long do they leave men on a Lighthouse?" she asked. He told her. He was amazingly well informed. And as he was grateful, and as he liked her, and as he was beginning to enjoy himself, so now, Mrs. Ramsay thought, she could return to that dream land, that unreal but fascinating place, the Mannings' drawing-room at Marlow[98] twenty years ago; where one moved about without haste or anxiety, for there was no future to worry about. She knew what had happened to them, what to her. It was like reading a good book again, for she knew the end of that story, since it had happened twenty years ago, and life, which shot down even from this dining-room table in cascades, heaven knows where, was sealed up there, and lay, like a lake, placidly between its banks. He said they had built a billiard room–was it possible? Would William go on talking about the Mannings? She wanted him to. But, no–for some reason he was no longer in the mood. She tried. He did not respond. She could not force him. She was disappointed.

"The children are disgraceful," she said, sighing. He said something about punctuality being one of the minor virtues which we do not acquire until later in life.

"If at all," said Mrs. Ramsay merely to fill up space, thinking what an old maid William was becoming. Conscious of his treachery, conscious of her wish to talk about something more intimate, yet out of mood for it at present, he felt come over him the disagreeableness of life, sitting there, waiting. Perhaps the others were saying something interesting? What were they saying?

That the fishing season was bad; that the men were emigrating. They were talking about wages and unemployment. The young man was abusing

98. See note 95.

the government. William Bankes, thinking what a relief it was to catch on to something of this sort when private life was disagreeable, heard him say something about "one of the most scandalous acts of the present government." Lily was listening; Mrs. Ramsay was listening; they were all listening. But already bored, Lily felt that something was lacking; Mr. Bankes felt that something was lacking. Pulling her shawl round her Mrs. Ramsay felt that something was lacking. All of them bending themselves to listen thought, "Pray heaven that the inside of my mind may not be exposed," for each thought, "The others are feeling this. They are outraged and indignant with the government about the fishermen. Whereas, I feel nothing at all." But perhaps, thought Mr. Bankes, as he looked at Mr. Tansley, here is the man. One was always waiting for the man. There was always a chance. At any moment the leader might arise; the man of genius, in politics as in anything else. Probably he will be extremely disagreeable to us old fogies, thought Mr. Bankes, doing his best to make allowances, for he knew by some curious physical sensation, as of nerves erect in his spine, that he was jealous, for himself partly, partly more probably for his work, for his point of view, for his science; and therefore he was not entirely open-minded or altogether fair, for Mr. Tansley seemed to be saying, You have wasted your lives. You are all of you wrong. Poor old fogies, you're hopelessly behind the times. He seemed to be rather cocksure, this young man; and his manners were bad. But Mr. Bankes bade himself observe, he had courage; he had ability; he was extremely well up in the facts. Probably, Mr. Bankes thought, as Tansley abused the government, there is a good deal in what he says.

"Tell me now…" he said. So they argued about politics, and Lily looked at the leaf on the table-cloth; and Mrs. Ramsay, leaving the argument entirely in the hands of the two men, wondered why she was so bored by this talk, and wished, looking at her husband at the other end of the table, that he would say something. One word, she said to herself. For if he said a thing, it would make all the difference. He went to the heart of things. He cared about fishermen and their wages. He could not sleep for thinking of them. It was altogether different when he spoke; one did not feel then, pray heaven you don't see how little I care, because one did care. Then, realising that it was because she admired him so much that she was waiting for him to speak, she felt as if somebody had been praising her husband to her and their marriage, and she glowed all over without realising that it was she herself who had praised him. She looked at him thinking to find this in his face; he would be looking magnificent… But not in the least! He was screwing his face up, he was scowling and frowning, and flushing with anger. What on earth was it about? she wondered. What could be the matter? Only that poor old Augustus had asked for another plate of soup–that was all. It was unthinkable, it was detestable (so he signalled to her across the table) that Augustus

should be beginning his soup over again. He loathed people eating when he had finished. She saw his anger fly like a pack of hounds into his eyes, his brow, and she knew that in a moment something violent would explode, and then–thank goodness! she saw him clutch himself and clap a brake on the wheel, and the whole of his body seemed to emit sparks but not words. He sat there scowling. He had said nothing, he would have her observe. Let her give him the credit for that! But why after all should poor Augustus not ask for another plate of soup? He had merely touched Ellen's arm and said:

"Ellen, please, another plate of soup," and then Mr. Ramsay scowled like that.

And why not? Mrs. Ramsay demanded. Surely they could let Augustus have his soup if he wanted it. He hated people wallowing in food, Mr. Ramsay frowned at her. He hated everything dragging on for hours like this. But he had controlled himself, Mr. Ramsay would have her observe, disgusting though the sight was. But why show it so plainly, Mrs. Ramsay demanded (they looked at each other down the long table sending these questions and answers across, each knowing exactly what the other felt). Everybody could see, Mrs. Ramsay thought. There was Rose gazing at her father, there was Roger gazing at his father; both would be off in spasms of laughter in another second, she knew, and so she said promptly (indeed it was time):

"Light the candles," and they jumped up instantly and went and fumbled at the sideboard.

Why could he never conceal his feelings? Mrs. Ramsay wondered, and she wondered if Augustus Carmichael had noticed. Perhaps he had; perhaps he had not. She could not help respecting the composure with which he sat there, drinking his soup. If he wanted soup, he asked for soup. Whether people laughed at him or were angry with him he was the same. He did not like her, she knew that; but partly for that very reason she respected him, and looking at him, drinking soup, very large and calm in the failing light, and monumental, and contemplative, she wondered what he did feel then, and why he was always content and dignified; and she thought how devoted he was to Andrew, and would call him into his room, and Andrew said, "show him things." And there he would lie all day long on the lawn brooding presumably over his poetry, till he reminded one of a cat watching birds, and then he clapped his paws together when he had found the word, and her husband said, "Poor old Augustus–he's a true poet," which was high praise from her husband.

Now eight candles were stood down the table, and after the first stoop the flames stood upright and drew with them into visibility the long table entire, and in the middle a yellow and purple dish of fruit. What

had she done with it, Mrs. Ramsay wondered, for Rose's arrangement of the grapes and pears, of the horny pink-lined shell, of the bananas, made her think of a trophy fetched from the bottom of the sea, of Neptune's[99] banquet, of the bunch that hangs with vine leaves over the shoulder of Bacchus[100] (in some picture), among the leopard skins and the torches lolloping red and gold… Thus brought up suddenly into the light it seemed possessed of great size and depth, was like a world in which one could take one's staff and climb hills, she thought, and go down into valleys, and to her pleasure (for it brought them into sympathy momentarily) she saw that Augustus too feasted his eyes on the same plate of fruit, plunged in, broke off a bloom there, a tassel here, and returned, after feasting, to his hive. That was his way of looking, different from hers. But looking together united them.

Now all the candles were lit up, and the faces on both sides of the table were brought nearer by the candle light, and composed, as they had not been in the twilight, into a party round a table, for the night was now shut off by panes of glass, which, far from giving any accurate view of the outside world, rippled it so strangely that here, inside the room, seemed to be order and dry land; there, outside, a reflection in which things waved and vanished, waterily.

Some change at once went through them all, as if this had really happened, and they were all conscious of making a party together in a hollow, on an island; had their common cause against that fluidity out there. Mrs. Ramsay, who had been uneasy, waiting for Paul and Minta to come in, and unable, she felt, to settle to things, now felt her uneasiness changed to expectation. For now they must come, and Lily Briscoe, trying to analyse the cause of the sudden exhilaration, compared it with that moment on the tennis lawn, when solidity suddenly vanished, and such vast spaces lay between them; and now the same effect was got by the many candles in the sparely furnished room, and the uncurtained windows, and the bright mask-like look of faces seen by candlelight. Some weight was taken off them; anything might happen, she felt. They must come now, Mrs. Ramsay thought, looking at the door, and at that instant, Minta Doyle, Paul Rayley, and a maid carrying a great dish in her hands came in together. They were awfully late; they were horribly late, Minta said, as they found their way to different ends of the table.

"I lost my brooch–my grandmother's brooch," said Minta with a sound of lamentation in her voice, and a suffusion in her large brown eyes, looking down, looking up, as she sat by Mr. Ramsay, which roused his chivalry so that he bantered her.

99. Roman god of the sea.
100. Roman god of wine.

How could she be such a goose, he asked, as to scramble about the rocks in jewels?

She was by way of being terrified of him–he was so fearfully clever, and the first night when she had sat by him, and he talked about George Eliot, she had been really frightened, for she had left the third volume of *Middlemarch*[101] in the train and she never knew what happened in the end; but afterwards she got on perfectly, and made herself out even more ignorant than she was, because he liked telling her she was a fool. And so tonight, directly he laughed at her, she was not frightened. Besides, she knew, directly she came into the room that the miracle had happened; she wore her golden haze. Sometimes she had it; sometimes not. She never knew why it came or why it went, or if she had it until she came into the room and then she knew instantly by the way some man looked at her. Yes, tonight she had it, tremendously; she knew that by the way Mr. Ramsay told her not to be a fool. She sat beside him, smiling.

It must have happened then, thought Mrs. Ramsay; they are engaged. And for a moment she felt what she had never expected to feel again–jealousy. For he, her husband, felt it too–Minta's glow; he liked these girls, these golden-reddish girls, with something flying, something a little wild and harum-scarum[102] about them, who didn't "scrape their hair off,"[103] weren't, as he said about poor Lily Briscoe, "skimpy". There was some quality which she herself had not, some lustre, some richness, which attracted him, amused him, led him to make favourites of girls like Minta. They might cut his hair from him, plait him watch-chains, or interrupt him at his work, hailing him (she heard them), "Come along, Mr. Ramsay; it's our turn to beat them now," and out he came to play tennis.

But indeed she was not jealous, only, now and then, when she made herself look in her glass, a little resentful that she had grown old, perhaps, by her own fault. (The bill for the greenhouse and all the rest of it.) She was grateful to them for laughing at him. ("How many pipes have you smoked today, Mr. Ramsay?" and so on), till he seemed a young man; a man very attractive to women, not burdened, not weighed down with the greatness of his labours and the sorrows of the world and his fame or his failure, but again as she had first known him, gaunt but gallant; helping her out of a boat, she remembered; with delightful ways, like that (she looked at him, and he looked astonishingly young, teasing Minta). For herself–"Put it down there," she said, helping the Swiss girl to place gently before her the huge brown pot in which

101. George Eliot was the pen name of Marian Evans (1819-1880), the author of Middlemarch, a great Victorian novel.
102. Wild, reckless.
103. I.e., wore their hair loosely in a modern fashion, not pinned up tightly and formally.

was the Boeuf en Daube–for her own part, she liked her boobies[104]. Paul must sit by her. She had kept a place for him. Really, she sometimes thought she liked the boobies best. They did not bother one with their dissertations. How much they missed, after all, these very clever men! How dried up they did become, to be sure. There was something, she thought as he sat down, very charming about Paul. His manners were delightful to her, and his sharp cut nose and his bright blue eyes. He was so considerate. Would he tell her–now that they were all talking again–what had happened?

"We went back to look for Minta's brooch," he said, sitting down by her. "We"–that was enough. She knew from the effort, the rise in his voice to surmount a difficult word that it was the first time he had said "we." "We did this, we did that." They'll say that all their lives, she thought, and an exquisite scent of olives and oil and juice rose from the great brown dish as Marthe, with a little flourish, took the cover off. The cook had spent three days over that dish. And she must take great care, Mrs. Ramsay thought, diving into the soft mass, to choose a specially tender piece for William Bankes. And she peered into the dish, with its shiny walls and its confusion of savoury brown and yellow meats and its bay leaves and its wine, and thought, This will celebrate the occasion–a curious sense rising in her, at once freakish and tender, of celebrating a festival, as if two emotions were called up in her, one profound–for what could be more serious than the love of man for woman, what more commanding, more impressive, bearing in its bosom the seeds of death; at the same time these lovers, these people entering into illusion glittering eyed, must be danced round with mockery, decorated with garlands.

"It is a triumph," said Mr. Bankes, laying his knife down for a moment. He had eaten attentively. It was rich; it was tender. It was perfectly cooked. How did she manage these things in the depths of the country? he asked her. She was a wonderful woman. All his love, all his reverence, had returned; and she knew it.

"It is a French recipe of my grandmother's,"[105] said Mrs. Ramsay, speaking with a ring of great pleasure in her voice. Of course it was French. What passes for cookery in England is an abomination (they agreed). It is putting cabbages in water. It is roasting meat till it is like leather. It is cutting off the delicious skins of vegetables. "In which," said Mr. Bankes, "all the virtue of the vegetable is contained." And the waste, said Mrs. Ramsay. A whole French family could live on what an English cook throws away. Spurred on by her sense that William's affection had come back to her, and that everything was all

104. A gentle term for fools.
105. See note 10 on Julia Stephen's ancestry.

right again, and that her suspense was over, and that now she was free both to triumph and to mock, she laughed, she gesticulated, till Lily thought, How childlike, how absurd she was, sitting up there with all her beauty opened again in her, talking about the skins of vegetables. There was something frightening about her. She was irresistible. Always she got her own way in the end, Lily thought. Now she had brought this off–Paul and Minta, one might suppose, were engaged. Mr. Bankes was dining here. She put a spell on them all, by wishing, so simply, so directly, and Lily contrasted that abundance with her own poverty of spirit, and supposed that it was partly that belief (for her face was all lit up–without looking young, she looked radiant) in this strange, this terrifying thing, which made Paul Rayley, sitting at her side, all of a tremor, yet abstract, absorbed, silent. Mrs. Ramsay, Lily felt, as she talked about the skins of vegetables, exalted that, worshipped that; held her hands over it to warm them, to protect it, and yet, having brought it all about, somehow laughed, led her victims, Lily felt, to the altar. It came over her too now–the emotion, the vibration, of love. How inconspicuous she felt herself by Paul's side! He, glowing, burning; she, aloof, satirical; he, bound for adventure; she, moored to the shore; he, launched, incautious; she solitary, left out–and, ready to implore a share, if it were a disaster, in his disaster, she said shyly:

"When did Minta lose her brooch?"

He smiled the most exquisite smile, veiled by memory, tinged by dreams. He shook his head. "On the beach," he said.

"I'm going to find it," he said, "I'm getting up early." This being kept secret from Minta, he lowered his voice, and turned his eyes to where she sat, laughing, beside Mr. Ramsay.

Lily wanted to protest violently and outrageously her desire to help him, envisaging how in the dawn on the beach she would be the one to pounce on the brooch half-hidden by some stone, and thus herself be included among the sailors and adventurers. But what did he reply to her offer? She actually said with an emotion that she seldom let appear, "Let me come with you," and he laughed. He meant yes or no–either perhaps. But it was not his meaning–it was the odd chuckle he gave, as if he had said, Throw yourself over the cliff if you like, I don't care. He turned on her cheek the heat of love, its horror, its cruelty, its unscrupulosity. It scorched her, and Lily, looking at Minta, being charming to Mr. Ramsay at the other end of the table, flinched for her exposed to these fangs, and was thankful. For at any rate, she said to herself, catching sight of the salt cellar on the pattern, she need not marry, thank Heaven: she need not undergo that degradation. She was saved from that dilution. She would move the tree

rather more to the middle.

Such was the complexity of things. For what happened to her, especially staying with the Ramsays, was to be made to feel violently two opposite things at the same time; that's what you feel, was one; that's what I feel, was the other, and then they fought together in her mind, as now. It is so beautiful, so exciting, this love, that I tremble on the verge of it, and offer, quite out of my own habit, to look for a brooch on a beach; also it is the stupidest, the most barbaric of human passions, and turns a nice young man with a profile like a gem's (Paul's was exquisite) into a bully with a crowbar (he was swaggering, he was insolent) in the Mile End Road.[106] Yet, she said to herself, from the dawn of time odes have been sung to love; wreaths heaped and roses; and if you asked nine people out of ten they would say they wanted nothing but this–love; while the women, judging from her own experience, would all the time be feeling, This is not what we want; there is nothing more tedious, puerile, and inhumane than this; yet it is also beautiful and necessary. Well then, well then? she asked, somehow expecting the others to go on with the argument, as if in an argument like this one threw one's own little bolt which fell short obviously and left the others to carry it on. So she listened again to what they were saying in case they should throw any light upon the question of love.

"Then," said Mr. Bankes, "there is that liquid the English call coffee."

"Oh, coffee!" said Mrs. Ramsay. But it was much rather a question (she was thoroughly roused, Lily could see, and talked very emphatically) of real butter and clean milk. Speaking with warmth and eloquence, she described the iniquity of the English dairy system, and in what state milk was delivered at the door, and was about to prove her charges, for she had gone into the matter,[107] when all round the table, beginning with Andrew in the middle, like a fire leaping from tuft to tuft of furze, her children laughed; her husband laughed; she was laughed at, fire-encircled, and forced to veil her crest, dismount her batteries, and only retaliate by displaying the raillery and ridicule of the table to Mr. Bankes as an example of what one suffered if one attacked the prejudices of the British Public.

Purposely, however, for she had it on her mind that Lily, who had helped her with Mr. Tansley, was out of things, she exempted her from the rest; said "Lily anyhow agrees with me," and so drew her in, a little fluttered, a little startled. (For she was thinking about love.) They were both out of things, Mrs. Ramsay had been thinking,

106. In London's East End, then a rough area.

107. See notes 11 and 68 on Julia Stephen's good works.

both Lily and Charles Tansley. Both suffered from the glow of the other two. He, it was clear, felt himself utterly in the cold; no woman would look at him with Paul Rayley in the room. Poor fellow! Still, he had his dissertation, the influence of somebody upon something: he could take care of himself. With Lily it was different. She faded, under Minta's glow; became more inconspicuous than ever, in her little grey dress with her little puckered face and her little Chinese eyes. Everything about her was so small. Yet, thought Mrs. Ramsay, comparing her with Minta, as she claimed her help (for Lily should bear her out she talked no more about her dairies than her husband did about his boots–he would talk by the hour about his boots) of the two, Lily at forty will be the better. There was in Lily a thread of something; a flare of something; something of her own which Mrs. Ramsay liked very much indeed, but no man would, she feared. Obviously, not, unless it were a much older man, like William Bankes. But then he cared, well, Mrs. Ramsay sometimes thought that he cared, since his wife's death, perhaps for her. He was not "in love" of course; it was one of those unclassified affections of which there are so many. Oh, but nonsense, she thought; William must marry Lily. They have so many things in common. Lily is so fond of flowers. They are both cold and aloof and rather self-sufficing. She must arrange for them to take a long walk together.

Foolishly, she had set them opposite each other. That could be remedied tomorrow. If it were fine, they should go for a picnic. Everything seemed possible. Everything seemed right. Just now (but this cannot last, she thought, dissociating herself from the moment while they were all talking about boots) just now she had reached security; she hovered like a hawk suspended; like a flag floated in an element of joy which filled every nerve of her body fully and sweetly, not noisily, solemnly rather, for it arose, she thought, looking at them all eating there, from husband and children and friends; all of which rising in this profound stillness (she was helping William Bankes to one very small piece more, and peered into the depths of the earthenware pot) seemed now for no special reason to stay there like a smoke, like a fume rising upwards, holding them safe together. Nothing need be said; nothing could be said. There it was, all round them. It partook, she felt, carefully helping Mr. Bankes to a specially tender piece, of eternity; as she had already felt about something different once before that afternoon; there is a coherence in things, a stability; something, she meant, is immune from change, and shines out (she glanced at the window with its ripple of reflected lights) in the face of the flowing, the fleeting, the spectral, like a ruby; so that again tonight she had the feeling she had had once today, already, of peace, of rest. Of such moments, she thought, the thing is made that endures.

"Yes," she assured William Bankes, "there is plenty for everybody."

"Andrew," she said, "hold your plate lower, or I shall spill it." (The Boeuf en Daube was a perfect triumph.) Here, she felt, putting the spoon down, where one could move or rest; could wait now (they were all helped) listening; could then, like a hawk which lapses suddenly from its high station, flaunt and sink on laughter easily, resting her whole weight upon what at the other end of the table her husband was saying about the square root of one thousand two hundred and fifty-three. That was the number, it seemed, on his watch.

What did it all mean? To this day she had no notion. A square root? What was that? Her sons knew. She leant on them; on cubes and square roots; that was what they were talking about now; on Voltaire[108] and Madame de Stael[109]; on the character of Napoleon[110]; on the French system of land tenure; on Lord Rosebery[111]; on Creevey's Memoirs[112]: she let it uphold her and sustain her, this admirable fabric of the masculine intelligence, which ran up and down, crossed this way and that, like iron girders spanning the swaying fabric, upholding the world,[113] so that she could trust herself to it utterly, even shut her eyes, or flicker them for a moment, as a child staring up from its pillow winks at the myriad layers of the leaves of a tree. Then she woke up. It was still being fabricated. William Bankes was praising the Waverly novels.[114]

He read one of them every six months, he said. And why should that make Charles Tansley angry? He rushed in (all, thought Mrs. Ramsay, because Prue will not be nice to him) and denounced the Waverly novels when he knew nothing about it, nothing about it whatsoever, Mrs. Ramsay thought, observing him rather than listening to what he said. She could see how it was from his manner–he wanted to assert himself, and so it would always be with him till he got his Professorship or married his wife, and so need not be always saying, "I–I–I." For that was what his criticism of poor Sir Walter, or perhaps it was Jane Austen,[115] amounted to. "I—I—I." He was thinking of himself and the impression he was making, as she could tell by the sound of his voice, and his emphasis and his uneasiness. Success would be good for him. At any rate they were off again. Now she need not listen. It could not last, she knew, but at the moment her eyes were so clear that they seemed to go round the table unveiling each of these people, and their thoughts

108. Pen name of the famously witty French writer Francois-Marie d'Arouet (1694-1778).
109. The Swiss-French writer Anne Louise Germaine de Staël-Holstein (1766-1817), who opposed Napoleon.
110. Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), French military leader and emperor, enemy of the British.
111. Archibald Philip Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery (1847-1929) was British Prime Minister from 1894-5. There were rumours that he was bisexual, which caused some scandal.
112. Thomas Creevey (1768-1838), a lawyer and politician whose memoirs depict the politics and society of his time.
113. Compare Mrs. Ramsay's image with Lily Briscoe's vision for her own (see notes 62 and 148).
114. Sir Walter Scott's (1771-1832) popular historical novels about Scotland.
115. Jane Austen (1775-1817), the great English novelist. Note that most of the writers discussed are from the past.

and their feelings, without effort like a light stealing under water so that its ripples and the reeds in it and the minnows balancing themselves, and the sudden silent trout are all lit up hanging, trembling. So she saw them; she heard them; but whatever they said had also this quality, as if what they said was like the movement of a trout when, at the same time, one can see the ripple and the gravel, something to the right, something to the left; and the whole is held together; for whereas in active life she would be netting and separating one thing from another; she would be saying she liked the Waverly novels[116] or had not read them; she would be urging herself forward; now she said nothing. For the moment, she hung suspended.

"Ah, but how long do you think it'll last?" said somebody. It was as if she had antennae trembling out from her, which, intercepting certain sentences, forced them upon her attention. This was one of them. She scented danger for her husband. A question like that would lead, almost certainly, to something being said which reminded him of his own failure. How long would he be read–he would think at once.[117] William Bankes (who was entirely free from all such vanity) laughed, and said he attached no importance to changes in fashion. Who could tell what was going to last–in literature or indeed in anything else?

"Let us enjoy what we do enjoy," he said. His integrity seemed to Mrs. Ramsay quite admirable. He never seemed for a moment to think, But how does this affect me? But then if you had the other temperament, which must have praise, which must have encouragement, naturally you began (and she knew that Mr. Ramsay was beginning) to be uneasy; to want somebody to say, Oh, but your work will last, Mr. Ramsay, or something like that. He showed his uneasiness quite clearly now by saying, with some irritation, that, anyhow, Scott (or was it Shakespeare ?) would last him his lifetime. He said it irritably. Everybody, she thought, felt a little uncomfortable, without knowing why. Then Minta Doyle, whose instinct was fine, said bluffly, absurdly, that she did not believe that any one really enjoyed reading Shakespeare. Mr. Ramsay said grimly (but his mind was turned away again) that very few people liked it as much as they said they did. But, he added, there is considerable merit in some of the plays nevertheless, and Mrs. Ramsay saw that it would be all right for the moment anyhow; he would laugh at Minta, and she, Mrs. Ramsay saw, realising his extreme anxiety about himself, would, in her own way, see that he was taken care of, and praise him, somehow or other. But she wished it was not necessary: perhaps it was her fault that it was necessary. Anyhow, she was free now to listen to what Paul Rayley was trying to say about books one had read as a boy. They lasted, he said. He had read some of Tolstoi[118] at

116. See note 114 on Scott.

117. See note 49 on Leslie Stephen's worry that he was a failure, and his concern for his own literary legacy.

118. Leo Tolstoy (also spelled Tolstoi) (1828-1910), the great Russian novelist.

school. There was one he always remembered, but he had forgotten the name. Russian names were impossible, said Mrs. Ramsay. “Vronsky,” said Paul. He remembered that because he always thought it such a good name for a villain. “Vronsky,” said Mrs. Ramsay; “Oh, *Anna Karenina*,”[119] but that did not take them very far; books were not in their line. No, Charles Tansley would put them both right in a second about books, but it was all so mixed up with, Am I saying the right thing? Am I making a good impression? that, after all, one knew more about him than about Tolstoi, whereas, what Paul said was about the thing, simply, not himself, nothing else. Like all stupid people, he had a kind of modesty too, a consideration for what you were feeling, which, once in a way at least, she found attractive. Now he was thinking, not about himself, or about Tolstoi, but whether she was cold, whether she felt a draught, whether she would like a pear.

No, she said, she did not want a pear. Indeed she had been keeping guard over the dish of fruit (without realising it) jealously, hoping that nobody would touch it. Her eyes had been going in and out among the curves and shadows of the fruit, among the rich purples of the lowland grapes, then over the horny ridge of the shell, putting a yellow against a purple, a curved shape against a round shape, without knowing why she did it, or why, every time she did it, she felt more and more serene; until, oh, what a pity that they should do it–a hand reached out, took a pear, and spoilt the whole thing. In sympathy she looked at Rose. She looked at Rose sitting between Jasper and Prue. How odd that one’s child should do that!

How odd to see them sitting there, in a row, her children, Jasper, Rose, Prue, Andrew, almost silent, but with some joke of their own going on, she guessed, from the twitching at their lips. It was something quite apart from everything else, something they were hoarding up to laugh over in their own room. It was not about their father, she hoped. No, she thought not. What was it, she wondered, sadly rather, for it seemed to her that they would laugh when she was not there. There was all that hoarded behind those rather set, still, mask-like faces, for they did not join in easily; they were like watchers, surveyors, a little raised or set apart from the grown-up people. But when she looked at Prue tonight, she saw that this was not now quite true of her. She was just beginning, just moving, just descending. The faintest light was on her face, as if the glow of Minta opposite, some excitement, some anticipation of happiness was reflected in her, as if the sun of the love of men and women rose over the rim of the table-cloth, and without knowing what it was she bent towards it and greeted it. She kept looking at Minta, shyly, yet curiously, so that Mrs. Ramsay looked from one to the other and said,

119. Tolstoy’s novel Anna Karenina (1878) depicts a woman’s adultery; Vronsky is the title character’s lover.

speaking to Prue in her own mind, You will be as happy as she is one of these days. You will be much happier, she added, because you are my daughter, she meant; her own daughter must be happier than other people's daughters. But dinner was over. It was time to go. They were only playing with things on their plates. She would wait until they had done laughing at some story her husband was telling. He was having a joke with Minta about a bet. Then she would get up.

She liked Charles Tansley, she thought, suddenly; she liked his laugh. She liked him for being so angry with Paul and Minta. She liked his awkwardness. There was a lot in that young man after all. And Lily, she thought, putting her napkin beside her plate, she always has some joke of her own. One need never bother about Lily. She waited. She tucked her napkin under the edge of her plate. Well, were they done now? No. That story had led to another story. Her husband was in great spirits tonight, and wishing, she supposed, to make it all right with old Augustus after that scene about the soup, had drawn him in–they were telling stories about some one they had both known at college. She looked at the window in which the candle flames burnt brighter now that the panes were black, and looking at that outside the voices came to her very strangely, as if they were voices at a service in a cathedral, for she did not listen to the words. The sudden bursts of laughter and then one voice (Minta's) speaking alone, reminded her of men and boys crying out the Latin words of a service in some Roman Catholic cathedral. She waited. Her husband spoke. He was repeating something, and she knew it was poetry from the rhythm and the ring of exultation, and melancholy in his voice:

Come out and climb the garden path, Luriana Lurilee.
The China rose is all abloom and buzzing with the yellow bee.[120]

The words (she was looking at the window) sounded as if they were floating like flowers on water out there, cut off from them all, as if no one had said them, but they had come into existence of themselves.

And all the lives we ever lived and all the lives to be
Are full of trees and changing leaves.[121]

She did not know what they meant, but, like music, the words seemed to be spoken by her own voice, outside her self, saying quite easily and naturally what had been in her mind the whole evening while she said

120. Lines from Charles Elton's (1839-1900) poem "Luriana, Lurilee" (first published in 1943 in an anthology compiled by Woolf's friend and lover, Vita Sackville-West).

121. Elton; see note 120.

different things. She knew, without looking round, that every one at the table was listening to the voice saying:

I wonder if it seems to you, Luriana, Lurilee

with the same sort of relief and pleasure that she had, as if this were, at last, the natural thing to say, this were their own voice speaking.

But the voice had stopped. She looked round. She made herself get up. Augustus Carmichael had risen and, holding his table napkin so that it looked like a long white robe he stood chanting:

To see the Kings go riding by
Over lawn and daisy lea
With their palm leaves and cedar
Luriana, Lurilee,[122]

and as she passed him, he turned slightly towards her repeating the last words:

Luriana, Lurilee

and bowed to her as if he did her homage. Without knowing why, she felt that he liked her better than he ever had done before; and with a feeling of relief and gratitude she returned his bow and passed through the door which he held open for her.

It was necessary now to carry everything a step further. With her foot on the threshold she waited a moment longer in a scene which was vanishing even as she looked, and then, as she moved and took Minta's arm and left the room, it changed, it shaped itself differently; it had become, she knew, giving one last look at it over her shoulder, already the past.

18

As usual, Lily thought. There was always something that had to be done at that precise moment, something that Mrs. Ramsay had decided for reasons of her own to do instantly, it might be with every one standing about making jokes, as now, not being able to decide whether they were going into the smoking-room, into the drawing-room, up to the attics. Then one saw Mrs. Ramsay in the midst of this hubbub standing there with

122. Elton; see note 120.

Minta's arm in hers, bethink her, "Yes, it is time for that now," and so make off at once with an air of secrecy to do something alone. And directly she went a sort of disintegration set in; they wavered about, went different ways, Mr. Bankes took Charles Tansley by the arm and went off to finish on the terrace the discussion they had begun at dinner about politics, thus giving a turn to the whole poise of the evening, making the weight fall in a different direction, as if, Lily thought, seeing them go, and hearing a word or two about the policy of the Labour Party, they had gone up on to the bridge of the ship and were taking their bearings; the change from poetry to politics struck her like that; so Mr. Bankes and Charles Mrs. Ramsay going upstairs in the lamplight alone. Where, Lily wondered, was she going so quickly?

Not that she did in fact run or hurry; she went indeed rather slowly. She felt rather inclined just for a moment to stand still after all that chatter, and pick out one particular thing; the thing that mattered; to detach it; separate it off; clean it of all the emotions and odds and ends of things, and so hold it before her, and bring it to the tribunal where, ranged about in conclave, sat the judges she had set up to decide these things. Is it good, is it bad, is it right or wrong? Where are we all going to? and so on. So she righted herself after the shock of the event, and quite unconsciously and incongruously, used the branches of the elm trees outside to help her to stabilise her position. Her world was changing: they were still. The event had given her a sense of movement. All must be in order. She must get that right and that right, she thought, insensibly approving of the dignity of the trees' stillness, and now again of the superb upward rise (like the beak of a ship up a wave) of the elm branches as the wind raised them. For it was windy (she stood a moment to look out). It was windy, so that the leaves now and then brushed open a star, and the stars themselves seemed to be shaking and darting light and trying to flash out between the edges of the leaves. Yes, that was done then, accomplished; and as with all things done, became solemn. Now one thought of it, cleared of chatter and emotion, it seemed always to have been, only was shown now and so being shown, struck everything into stability. They would, she thought, going on again, however long they lived, come back to this night; this moon; this wind; this house: and to her too. It flattered her, where she was most susceptible of flattery, to think how, wound about in their hearts, however long they lived she would be woven; and this, and this, and this, she thought, going upstairs, laughing, but affectionately, at the sofa on the landing (her mother's); at the rocking-chair (her father's); at the map of the Hebrides. All that would be revived again in the lives of Paul and Minta; "the Rayleys"–she tried the new name over; and she felt, with her hand on the nursery door, that community of feeling with other people which emotion gives as if the walls of partition had become so thin that practically (the feeling was one of

relief and happiness) it was all one stream, and chairs, tables, maps, were hers, were theirs, it did not matter whose, and Paul and Minta would carry it on when she was dead.

She turned the handle, firmly, lest it should squeak, and went in, pursing her lips slightly, as if to remind herself that she must not speak aloud. But directly she came in she saw, with annoyance, that the precaution was not needed. The children were not asleep. It was most annoying. Mildred should be more careful. There was James wide awake and Cam sitting bolt upright, and Mildred out of bed in her bare feet, and it was almost eleven and they were all talking. What was the matter? It was that horrid skull again. She had told Mildred to move it, but Mildred, of course, had forgotten, and now there was Cam wide awake, and James wide awake quarreling when they ought to have been asleep hours ago. What had possessed Edward to send them this horrid skull? She had been so foolish as to let them nail it up there. It was nailed fast, Mildred said, and Cam couldn't go to sleep with it in the room, and James screamed if she touched it.

Then Cam must go to sleep (it had great horns said Cam)–must go to sleep and dream of lovely palaces, said Mrs. Ramsay, sitting down on the bed by her side. She could see the horns, Cam said, all over the room. It was true. Wherever they put the light (and James could not sleep without a light) there was always a shadow somewhere.

"But think, Cam, it's only an old pig," said Mrs. Ramsay, "a nice black pig like the pigs at the farm." But Cam thought it was a horrid thing, branching at her all over the room.

"Well then," said Mrs. Ramsay, "we will cover it up," and they all watched her go to the chest of drawers, and open the little drawers quickly one after another, and not seeing anything that would do, she quickly took her own shawl off and wound it round the skull, round and round and round, and then she came back to Cam and laid her head almost flat on the pillow beside Cam's and said how lovely it looked now; how the fairies would love it; it was like a bird's nest; it was like a beautiful mountain such as she had seen abroad, with valleys and flowers and bells ringing and birds singing and little goats and antelopes and… She could see the words echoing as she spoke them rhythmically in Cam's mind, and Cam was repeating after her how it was like a mountain, a bird's nest, a garden, and there were little antelopes, and her eyes were opening and shutting, and Mrs. Ramsay went on speaking still more monotonously, and more rhythmically and more nonsensically, how she must shut her eyes and go to sleep and dream of mountains and valleys and stars falling and parrots and antelopes and gardens, and everything lovely, she said, raising her head very slowly and speaking more and more mechanically, until she sat upright and saw

that Cam was asleep.

Now, she whispered, crossing over to his bed, James must go to sleep too, for see, she said, the boar's skull was still there; they had not touched it; they had done just what he wanted; it was there quite unhurt. He made sure that the skull was still there under the shawl. But he wanted to ask her something more. Would they go to the Lighthouse tomorrow?

No, not tomorrow, she said, but soon, she promised him; the next fine day. He was very good. He lay down. She covered him up. But he would never forget, she knew, and she felt angry with Charles Tansley, with her husband, and with herself, for she had raised his hopes. Then feeling for her shawl and remembering that she had wrapped it round the boar's skull, she got up, and pulled the window down another inch or two, and heard the wind, and got a breath of the perfectly indifferent chill night air and murmured good night to Mildred and left the room and let the tongue of the door slowly lengthen in the lock and went out.

She hoped he would not bang his books on the floor above their heads, she thought, still thinking how annoying Charles Tansley was. For neither of them slept well; they were excitable children, and since he said things like that about the Lighthouse, it seemed to her likely that he would knock a pile of books over, just as they were going to sleep, clumsily sweeping them off the table with his elbow. For she supposed that he had gone upstairs to work. Yet he looked so desolate; yet she would feel relieved when he went; yet she would see that he was better treated tomorrow; yet he was admirable with her husband; yet his manners certainly wanted improving; yet she liked his laugh–thinking this, as she came downstairs, she noticed that she could now see the moon itself through the staircase window–the yellow harvest moon–and turned, and they saw her, standing above them on the stairs.

"That's my mother," thought Prue. Yes; Minta should look at her; Paul Rayley should look at her. That is the thing itself, she felt, as if there were only one person like that in the world; her mother. And, from having been quite grown up, a moment before, talking with the others, she became a child again, and what they had been doing was a game, and would her mother sanction their game, or condemn it, she wondered. And thinking what a chance it was for Minta and Paul and Lily to see her, and feeling what an extraordinary stroke of fortune it was for her, to have her, and how she would never grow up and never leave home, she said, like a child, "We thought of going down to the beach to watch the waves."

Instantly, for no reason at all, Mrs. Ramsay became like a girl of

twenty, full of gaiety. A mood of revelry suddenly took possession of her. Of course they must go; of course they must go, she cried, laughing; and running down the last three or four steps quickly, she began turning from one to the other and laughing and drawing Minta's wrap round her and saying she only wished she could come too, and would they be very late, and had any of them got a watch?

"Yes, Paul has," said Minta. Paul slipped a beautiful gold watch out of a little wash-leather case to show her. And as he held it in the palm of his hand before her, he felt, "She knows all about it. I need not say anything." He was saying to her as he showed her the watch, "I've done it, Mrs. Ramsay. I owe it all to you." And seeing the gold watch lying in his hand, Mrs. Ramsay felt, How extraordinarily lucky Minta is! She is marrying a man who has a gold watch in a wash-leather bag!

"How I wish I could come with you!" she cried. But she was withheld by something so strong that she never even thought of asking herself what it was. Of course it was impossible for her to go with them. But she would have liked to go, had it not been for the other thing, and tickled by the absurdity of her thought (how lucky to marry a man with a wash-leather bag for his watch) she went with a smile on her lips into the other room, where her husband sat reading.

19

Of course, she said to herself, coming into the room, she had to come here to get something she wanted. First she wanted to sit down in a particular chair under a particular lamp. But she wanted something more, though she did not know, could not think what it was that she wanted. She looked at her husband (taking up her stocking and beginning to knit), and saw that he did not want to be interrupted– that was clear. He was reading something that moved him very much. He was half smiling and then she knew he was controlling his emotion. He was tossing the pages over. He was acting it–perhaps he was thinking himself the person in the book. She wondered what book it was. Oh, it was one of old Sir Walter's[123] she saw, adjusting the shade of her lamp so that the light fell on her knitting. For Charles Tansley had been saying (she looked up as if she expected to hear the crash of books on the floor above), had been saying that people don't read Scott any more. Then her husband thought, "That's what they'll say of me;" so he went and got one of those books. And if he came to the conclusion "That's true" what Charles Tansley said, he would accept it

123. Sir Walter Scott; see note 114.

about Scott. (She could see that he was weighing, considering, putting this with that as he read.) But not about himself. He was always uneasy about himself. That troubled her. He would always be worrying about his own books–will they be read, are they good, why aren't they better, what do people think of me? Not liking to think of him so, and wondering if they had guessed at dinner why he suddenly became irritable when they talked about fame and books lasting, wondering if the children were laughing at that, she twitched the stockings out, and all the fine gravings[124] came drawn with steel instruments about her lips and forehead, and she grew still like a tree which has been tossing and quivering and now, when the breeze falls, settles, leaf by leaf, into quiet.

It didn't matter, any of it, she thought. A great man, a great book, fame–who could tell? She knew nothing about it. But it was his way with him, his truthfulness–for instance at dinner she had been thinking quite instinctively, If only he would speak! She had complete trust in him. And dismissing all this, as one passes in diving now a weed, now a straw, now a bubble, she felt again, sinking deeper, as she had felt in the hall when the others were talking, There is something I want–something I have come to get, and she fell deeper and deeper without knowing quite what it was, with her eyes closed. And she waited a little, knitting, wondering, and slowly rose those words they had said at dinner, "the China rose is all abloom and buzzing with the honey bee," began washing from side to side of her mind rhythmically, and as they washed, words, like little shaded lights, one red, one blue, one yellow, lit up in the dark of her mind, and seemed leaving their perches up there to fly across and across, or to cry out and to be echoed; so she turned and felt on the table beside her for a book.

And all the lives we ever lived
And all the lives to be,
Are full of trees and changing leaves,[125]

she murmured, sticking her needles into the stocking. And she opened the book and began reading here and there at random, and as she did so, she felt that she was climbing backwards, upwards, shoving her way up under petals that curved over her, so that she only knew this is white, or this is red. She did not know at first what the words meant at all.

124. Engraved lines.
125. Elton; see note 120.

Steer, hither steer your winged pines, all beaten Mariners[126]

she read and turned the page, swinging herself, zigzagging this way and that, from one line to another as from one branch to another, from one red and white flower to another, until a little sound roused her–her husband slapping his thighs. Their eyes met for a second; but they did not want to speak to each other. They had nothing to say, but something seemed, nevertheless, to go from him to her. It was the life, it was the power of it, it was the tremendous humour, she knew, that made him slap his thighs. Don't interrupt me, he seemed to be saying, don't say anything; just sit there. And he went on reading. His lips twitched. It filled him. It fortified him. He clean forgot all the little rubs and digs of the evening, and how it bored him unutterably to sit still while people ate and drank interminably, and his being so irritable with his wife and so touchy and minding when they passed his books over as if they didn't exist at all. But now, he felt, it didn't matter a damn who reached Z (if thought ran like an alphabet from A to Z). Somebody would reach it–if not he, then another. This man's strength and sanity, his feeling for straight forward simple things, these fishermen, the poor old crazed creature in Mucklebackit's cottage made him feel so vigorous, so relieved of something that he felt roused and triumphant and could not choke back his tears. Raising the book a little to hide his face, he let them fall and shook his head from side to side and forgot himself completely (but not one or two reflections about morality and French novels and English novels and Scott's hands being tied but his view perhaps being as true as the other view), forgot his own bothers and failures completely in poor Steenie's drowning and Mucklebackit's sorrow[127] (that was Scott at his best) and the astonishing delight and feeling of vigour that it gave him.

Well, let them improve upon that, he thought as he finished the chapter. He felt that he had been arguing with somebody, and had got the better of him. They could not improve upon that, whatever they might say; and his own position became more secure. The lovers were fiddlesticks, he thought, collecting it all in his mind again. That's fiddlesticks, that's first-rate, he thought, putting one thing beside another. But he must read it again. He could not remember the whole shape of the thing. He had to keep his judgement in suspense. So he returned to the other thought–if young men did not care for this, naturally they did not care for him either. One ought not to complain, thought Mr. Ramsay, trying to stifle his desire to complain to his wife that young men did not admire him. But he was determined; he would not

126. From William Browne's (1588-1643) poem "The Sirens' Song," which describes the fatal call of mermaids seeking to charm sailors to their deaths beneath the waves.

127. Mucklebackit and Steenie are characters from Sir Walter Scott's dramatic Scottish historical novel The Antiquary (1816). See note 114.

bother her again. Here he looked at her reading. She looked very peaceful, reading. He liked to think that every one had taken themselves off and that he and she were alone. The whole of life did not consist in going to bed with a woman, he thought, returning to Scott and Balzac[128], to the English novel and the French novel.

Mrs. Ramsay raised her head and like a person in a light sleep seemed to say that if he wanted her to wake she would, she really would, but otherwise, might she go on sleeping, just a little longer, just a little longer? She was climbing up those branches, this way and that, laying hands on one flower and then another.

Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose,[129]

she read, and so reading she was ascending, she felt, on to the top, on to the summit. How satisfying! How restful! All the odds and ends of the day stuck to this magnet; her mind felt swept, felt clean. And then there it was, suddenly entire; she held it in her hands, beautiful and reasonable, clear and complete, here–the sonnet.

But she was becoming conscious of her husband looking at her. He was smiling at her, quizzically, as if he were ridiculing her gently for being asleep in broad daylight, but at the same time he was thinking, Go on reading. You don't look sad now, he thought. And he wondered what she was reading, and exaggerated her ignorance, her simplicity, for he liked to think that she was not clever, not book-learned at all. He wondered if she understood what she was reading. Probably not, he thought. She was astonishingly beautiful. Her beauty seemed to him, if that were possible, to increase

Yet seem'd it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play,[130]

she finished.

"Well?" she said, echoing his smile dreamily, looking up from her book.

128. Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), great French novelist.

129. From Shakespeare's Sonnet 98, "From you I have been absent in the spring." Note that again, the Ramsays are turning to the past in their reading. This sonnet, like many of Shakespeare's, depicts the struggle for immortality, whether through great art or through children, which echoes the conflict between the Ramsays.

130. Shakespeare; see note 129.

As with your shadow I with these did play,

she murmured, putting the book on the table.

What had happened, she wondered, as she took up her knitting, since she had seen him alone? She remembered dressing, and seeing the moon; Andrew holding his plate too high at dinner; being depressed by something William had said; the birds in the trees; the sofa on the landing; the children being awake; Charles Tansley waking them with his books falling–oh, no, that she had invented; and Paul having a wash-leather case for his watch. Which should she tell him about?

“They’re engaged,” she said, beginning to knit, “Paul and Minta.”

“So I guessed,” he said. There was nothing very much to be said about it. Her mind was still going up and down, up and down with the poetry; he was still feeling very vigorous, very forthright, after reading about Steenie’s funeral.[131] So they sat silent. Then she became aware that she wanted him to say something.

Anything, anything, she thought, going on with her knitting. Anything will do.

“How nice it would be to marry a man with a wash-leather bag for his watch,” she said, for that was the sort of joke they had together.

He snorted. He felt about this engagement as he always felt about any engagement; the girl is much too good for that young man. Slowly it came into her head, why is it then that one wants people to marry? What was the value, the meaning of things? (Every word they said now would be true.) Do say something, she thought, wishing only to hear his voice. For the shadow, the thing folding them in was beginning, she felt, to close round her again. Say anything, she begged, looking at him, as if for help.

He was silent, swinging the compass on his watch-chain to and fro, and thinking of Scott’s novels and Balzac’s novels.[132] But through the crepuscular walls of their intimacy, for they were drawing together, involuntarily, coming side by side, quite close, she could feel his mind like a raised hand shadowing her mind; and he was beginning, now that her thoughts took a turn he disliked–towards this “pessimism” as he called it–to fidget, though he said nothing, raising his hand to his forehead, twisting a lock of hair, letting it fall again.

131. Scott; see note 114 and 127.
132. See notes 114 and 128.

"You won't finish that stocking tonight," he said, pointing to her stocking. That was what she wanted–the asperity in his voice reproving her. If he says it's wrong to be pessimistic probably it is wrong, she thought; the marriage will turn out all right.

"No," she said, flattening the stocking out upon her knee, "I shan't finish it."

And what then? For she felt that he was still looking at her, but that his look had changed. He wanted something–wanted the thing she always found it so difficult to give him; wanted her to tell him that she loved him. And that, no, she could not do. He found talking so much easier than she did. He could say things–she never could. So naturally it was always he that said the things, and then for some reason he would mind this suddenly, and would reproach her. A heartless woman he called her; she never told him that she loved him. But it was not so–it was not so. It was only that she never could say what she felt. Was there no crumb on his coat? Nothing she could do for him? Getting up, she stood at the window with the reddish-brown stocking in her hands, partly to turn away from him, partly because she remembered how beautiful it often is–the sea at night. But she knew that he had turned his head as she turned; he was watching her. She knew that he was thinking, You are more beautiful than ever. And she felt herself very beautiful. Will you not tell me just for once that you love me? He was thinking that, for he was roused, what with Minta and his book, and its being the end of the day and their having quarrelled about going to the Lighthouse. But she could not do it; she could not say it. Then, knowing that he was watching her, instead of saying anything she turned, holding her stocking, and looked at him. And as she looked at him she began to smile, for though she had not said a word, he knew, of course he knew, that she loved him. He could not deny it. And smiling she looked out of the window and said (thinking to herself, Nothing on earth can equal this happiness)–

"Yes, you were right. It's going to be wet tomorrow. You won't be able to go." And she looked at him smiling. For she had triumphed again. She had not said it: yet he knew.

II
TIME PASSES

1

"Well, we must wait for the future to show," said Mr. Bankes, coming in from the terrace.

"It's almost too dark to see," said Andrew, coming up from the beach.

"One can hardly tell which is the sea and which is the land," said Prue.

"Do we leave that light burning?" said Lily as they took their coats off indoors.

"No," said Prue, "not if every one's in."

"Andrew," she called back, "just put out the light in the hall."

One by one the lamps were all extinguished, except that Mr. Carmichael, who liked to lie awake a little reading Virgil,[133] kept his candle burning rather longer than the rest.

2

So with the lamps all put out, the moon sunk, and a thin rain drumming on the roof a downpouring of immense darkness began. Nothing, it seemed, could survive the flood, the profusion of darkness which, creeping in at keyholes and crevices, stole round window blinds, came into bedrooms, swallowed up here a jug and basin, there a bowl of red and yellow dahlias, there the sharp edges and firm bulk of a chest of drawers. Not only was furniture confounded; there was scarcely anything left of body or mind by which one could say, "This is he" or "This is she." Sometimes a hand was raised as if to clutch something or ward off something, or somebody groaned, or somebody laughed aloud as if sharing a joke with nothingness.

Nothing stirred in the drawing-room or in the dining-room or on the staircase. Only through the rusty hinges and swollen sea-moistened woodwork certain airs, detached from the body of the wind (the house

133. Ancient Roman poet (70-19 B.C.).

was ramshackle after all) crept round corners and ventured indoors. Almost one might imagine them, as they entered the drawing-room questioning and wondering, toying with the flap of hanging wall-paper, asking, would it hang much longer, when would it fall? Then smoothly brushing the walls, they passed on musingly as if asking the red and yellow roses on the wall-paper whether they would fade, and questioning (gently, for there was time at their disposal) the torn letters in the wastepaper basket, the flowers, the books, all of which were now open to them and asking, Were they allies? Were they enemies? How long would they endure?

So some random light directing them with its pale footfall upon stair and mat, from some uncovered star, or wandering ship, or the Lighthouse even, with its pale footfall upon stair and mat, the little airs mounted the staircase and nosed round bedroom doors. But here surely, they must cease. Whatever else may perish and disappear, what lies here is steadfast. Here one might say to those sliding lights, those fumbling airs that breathe and bend over the bed itself, here you can neither touch nor destroy. Upon which, wearily, ghostlily, as if they had feather-light fingers and the light persistency of feathers, they would look, once, on the shut eyes, and the loosely clasping fingers, and fold their garments wearily and disappear. And so, nosing, rubbing, they went to the window on the staircase, to the servants' bedrooms, to the boxes in the attics; descending, blanched the apples on the dining-room table, fumbled the petals of roses, tried the picture on the easel, brushed the mat and blew a little sand along the floor. At length, desisting, all ceased together, gathered together, all sighed together; all together gave off an aimless gust of lamentation to which some door in the kitchen replied; swung wide; admitted nothing; and slammed to.

[Here Mr. Carmichael, who was reading Virgil,[134] blew out his candle. It was past midnight.][135]

3

But what after all is one night? A short space, especially when the darkness dims so soon, and so soon a bird sings, a cock crows, or a faint green quickens, like a turning leaf, in the hollow of the wave. Night, however, succeeds to night. The winter holds a pack of them in store and deals them equally, evenly, with indefatigable fingers. They lengthen; they darken. Some of them hold aloft clear planets,

134. See note 133.

135. Here and below in this section, Woolf uses parentheses to show action going on in the background.

plates of brightness. The autumn trees, ravaged as they are, take on the flash of tattered flags kindling in the gloom of cool cathedral caves where gold letters on marble pages describe death in battle and how bones bleach and burn far away in Indian sands. The autumn trees gleam in the yellow moonlight, in the light of harvest moons, the light which mellows the energy of labour, and smooths the stubble, and brings the wave lapping blue to the shore.

It seemed now as if, touched by human penitence and all its toil, divine goodness had parted the curtain and displayed behind it, single, distinct, the hare erect; the wave falling; the boat rocking; which, did we deserve them, should be ours always. But alas, divine goodness, twitching the cord, draws the curtain; it does not please him; he covers his treasures in a drench of hail, and so breaks them, so confuses them that it seems impossible that their calm should ever return or that we should ever compose from their fragments a perfect whole or read in the littered pieces the clear words of truth. For our penitence deserves a glimpse only; our toil respite only.

The nights now are full of wind and destruction; the trees plunge and bend and their leaves fly helter skelter until the lawn is plastered with them and they lie packed in gutters and choke rain pipes and scatter damp paths. Also the sea tosses itself and breaks itself, and should any sleeper fancying that he might find on the beach an answer to his doubts, a sharer of his solitude, throw off his bedclothes and go down by himself to walk on the sand, no image with semblance of serving and divine promptitude comes readily to hand bringing the night to order and making the world reflect the compass of the soul. The hand dwindles in his hand; the voice bellows in his ear. Almost it would appear that it is useless in such confusion to ask the night those questions as to what, and why, and wherefore, which tempt the sleeper from his bed to seek an answer.

[Mr. Ramsay, stumbling along a passage one dark morning, stretched his arms out, but Mrs. Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, his arms, though stretched out, remained empty.][136]

4

So with the house empty and the doors locked and the mattresses rolled round, those stray airs, advance guards of great armies, blustered in, brushed bare boards, nibbled and fanned, met nothing in bedroom or

136. See note 135 on the use of parentheses. Woolf powerfully recalled her father’s similar posture after her mother’s sudden death, writing years later, “How that early morning picture has stayed with me!” (The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 5 (5 May, 1924). San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980. 85).

drawing-room that wholly resisted them but only hangings that flapped, wood that creaked, the bare legs of tables, saucepans and china already furred, tarnished, cracked. What people had shed and left–a pair of shoes, a shooting cap, some faded skirts and coats in wardrobes–those alone kept the human shape and in the emptiness indicated how once they were filled and animated; how once hands were busy with hooks and buttons; how once the looking-glass had held a face; had held a world hollowed out in which a figure turned, a hand flashed, the door opened, in came children rushing and tumbling; and went out again. Now, day after day, light turned, like a flower reflected in water, its sharp image on the wall opposite. Only the shadows of the trees, flourishing in the wind, made obeisance on the wall, and for a moment darkened the pool in which light reflected itself; or birds, flying, made a soft spot flutter slowly across the bedroom floor.

So loveliness reigned and stillness, and together made the shape of loveliness itself, a form from which life had parted; solitary like a pool at evening, far distant, seen from a train window, vanishing so quickly that the pool, pale in the evening, is scarcely robbed of its solitude, though once seen. Loveliness and stillness clasped hands in the bedroom, and among the shrouded jugs and sheeted chairs even the prying of the wind, and the soft nose of the clammy sea airs, rubbing, snuffling, iterating, and reiterating their questions–"Will you fade? Will you perish?"–scarcely disturbed the peace, the indifference, the air of pure integrity, as if the question they asked scarcely needed that they should answer: we remain.

Nothing it seemed could break that image, corrupt that innocence, or disturb the swaying mantle of silence which, week after week, in the empty room, wove into itself the falling cries of birds, ships hooting, the drone and hum of the fields, a dog's bark, a man's shout, and folded them round the house in silence. Once only a board sprang on the landing; once in the middle of the night with a roar, with a rupture, as after centuries of quiescence, a rock rends itself from the mountain and hurtles crashing into the valley, one fold of the shawl loosened and swung to and fro. Then again peace descended; and the shadow wavered; light bent to its own image in adoration on the bedroom wall; and Mrs. McNab, tearing the veil of silence with hands that had stood in the wash-tub, grinding it with boots that had crunched the shingle,[137] came as directed to open all windows, and dust the bedrooms.

5

137. The rocks of the beach.

As she lurched (for she rolled like a ship at sea) and leered (for her eyes fell on nothing directly, but with a sidelong glance that deprecated the scorn and anger of the world–she was witless, she knew it), as she clutched the banisters and hauled herself upstairs and rolled from room to room, she sang. Rubbing the glass of the long looking-glass and leering sideways at her swinging figure a sound issued from her lips–something that had been gay twenty years before on the stage perhaps, had been hummed and danced to, but now, coming from the toothless, bonneted, care-taking woman, was robbed of meaning, was like the voice of witlessness, humour, persistency itself, trodden down but springing up again, so that as she lurched, dusting, wiping, she seemed to say how it was one long sorrow and trouble, how it was getting up and going to bed again, and bringing things out and putting them away again. It was not easy or snug this world she had known for close on seventy years. Bowed down she was with weariness. How long, she asked, creaking and groaning on her knees under the bed, dusting the boards, how long shall it endure? but hobbled to her feet again, pulled herself up, and again with her sidelong leer which slipped and turned aside even from her own face, and her own sorrows, stood and gaped in the glass, aimlessly smiling, and began again the old amble and hobble, taking up mats, putting down china, looking sideways in the glass, as if, after all, she had her consolations, as if indeed there twined about her dirge some incorrigible hope. Visions of joy there must have been at the wash-tub, say with her children (yet two had been base-born and one had deserted her), at the public-house, drinking; turning over scraps in her drawers. Some cleavage of the dark there must have been, some channel in the depths of obscurity through which light enough issued to twist her face grinning in the glass and make her, turning to her job again, mumble out the old music hall song. The mystic, the visionary, walking the beach on a fine night, stirring a puddle, looking at a stone, asking themselves “What am I,” “What is this?” had suddenly an answer vouchsafed them: (they could not say what it was) so that they were warm in the frost and had comfort in the desert. But Mrs. McNab continued to drink and gossip as before.

6

The Spring without a leaf to toss, bare and bright like a virgin fierce in her chastity, scornful in her purity, was laid out on fields wide-eyed and watchful and entirely careless of what was done or thought by the beholders. [Prue Ramsay, leaning on her father’s arm, was given in marriage. What, people said, could have been more fitting? And, they added, how beautiful she looked!]

As summer neared, as the evenings lengthened, there came to the wakeful, the hopeful, walking the beach, stirring the pool, imaginations of the strangest kind–of flesh turned to atoms which drove before the wind, of stars flashing in their hearts, of cliff, sea, cloud, and sky brought purposely together to assemble outwardly the scattered parts of the vision within. In those mirrors, the minds of men, in those pools of uneasy water, in which clouds for ever turn and shadows form, dreams persisted, and it was impossible to resist the strange intimation which every gull, flower, tree, man and woman, and the white earth itself seemed to declare (but if questioned at once to withdraw) that good triumphs, happiness prevails, order rules; or to resist the extraordinary stimulus to range hither and thither in search of some absolute good, some crystal of intensity, remote from the known pleasures and familiar virtues, something alien to the processes of domestic life, single, hard, bright, like a diamond in the sand, which would render the possessor secure. Moreover, softened and acquiescent, the spring with her bees humming and gnats dancing threw her cloak about her, veiled her eyes, averted her head, and among passing shadows and flights of small rain seemed to have taken upon her a knowledge of the sorrows of mankind.

[Prue Ramsay died that summer in some illness connected with childbirth, which was indeed a tragedy, people said, everything, they said, had promised so well.][138]

And now in the heat of summer the wind sent its spies about the house again. Flies wove a web in the sunny rooms; weeds that had grown close to the glass in the night tapped methodically at the window pane. When darkness fell, the stroke of the Lighthouse, which had laid itself with such authority upon the carpet in the darkness, tracing its pattern, came now in the softer light of spring mixed with moonlight gliding gently as if it laid its caress and lingered steathily and looked and came lovingly again. But in the very lull of this loving caress, as the long stroke leant upon the bed, the rock was rent asunder; another fold of the shawl loosened; there it hung, and swayed. Through the short summer nights and the long summer days, when the empty rooms seemed to murmur with the echoes of the fields and the hum of flies, the long streamer waved gently, swayed aimlessly; while the sun so striped and barred the rooms and filled them with yellow haze that Mrs. McNab, when she broke in and lurched about, dusting, sweeping, looked like a tropical fish oaring its way through sun-lanced waters.

But slumber and sleep though it might there came later in the summer ominous sounds like the measured blows of hammers dulled on felt,

138. Woolf's half-sister Stella Duckworth Hills (1869-97) died, soon after her marriage, of a somewhat mysterious illness connected with her early pregnancy, diagnosed as peritonitis.

which, with their repeated shocks still further loosened the shawl and cracked the tea-cups. Now and again some glass tinkled in the cupboard as if a giant voice had shrieked so loud in its agony that tumblers stood inside a cupboard vibrated too. Then again silence fell; and then, night after night, and sometimes in plain mid-day when the roses were bright and light turned on the wall its shape clearly there seemed to drop into this silence, this indifference, this integrity, the thud of something falling.

[A shell exploded. Twenty or thirty young men were blown up in France, among them Andrew Ramsay, whose death, mercifully, was instantaneous.][139]

At that season those who had gone down to pace the beach and ask of the sea and sky what message they reported or what vision they affirmed had to consider among the usual tokens of divine bounty–the sunset on the sea, the pallor of dawn, the moon rising, fishing-boats against the moon, and children making mud pies or pelting each other with handfuls of grass, something out of harmony with this jocundity and this serenity. There was the silent apparition of an ashen-coloured ship for instance, come, gone; there was a purplish stain upon the bland surface of the sea as if something had boiled and bled, invisibly, beneath. This intrusion into a scene calculated to stir the most sublime reflections and lead to the most comfortable conclusions stayed their pacing. It was difficult blandly to overlook them; to abolish their significance in the landscape; to continue, as one walked by the sea, to marvel how beauty outside mirrored beauty within.

Did Nature supplement what man advanced? Did she complete what he began? With equal complacence she saw his misery, his meanness, and his torture. That dream, of sharing, completing, of finding in solitude on the beach an answer, was then but a reflection in a mirror, and the mirror itself was but the surface glassiness which forms in quiescence when the nobler powers sleep beneath? Impatient, despairing yet loth to go (for beauty offers her lures, has her consolations), to pace the beach was impossible; contemplation was unendurable; the mirror was broken.

[Mr. Carmichael brought out a volume of poems that spring, which had an unexpected success. The war, people said, had revived their interest in poetry.]

7

139. The First World War is only referred to obliquely in the novel, but its destructive chaos is a clear influence. This reference is also a metaphor for Woolf’s brother Thoby Stephen’s sudden death of typhus in 1904.

Night after night, summer and winter, the torment of storms, the arrow-like stillness of fine (had there been any one to listen) from the upper rooms of the empty house only gigantic chaos streaked with lightning could have been heard tumbling and tossing, as the winds and waves disported themselves like the amorphous bulks of leviathans whose brows are pierced by no light of reason, and mounted one on top of another, and lunged and plunged in the darkness or the daylight (for night and day, month and year ran shapelessly together) in idiot games, until it seemed as if the universe were battling and tumbling, in brute confusion and wanton lust aimlessly by itself.

In spring the garden urns, casually filled with wind-blown plants, were gay as ever. Violets came and daffodils. But the stillness and the brightness of the day were as strange as the chaos and tumult of night, with the trees standing there, and the flowers standing there, looking before them, looking up, yet beholding nothing, eyeless, and so terrible.

8

Thinking no harm, for the family would not come, never again, some said, and the house would be sold at Michaelmas perhaps, Mrs. McNab stooped and picked a bunch of flowers to take home with her. She laid them on the table while she dusted. She was fond of flowers. It was a pity to let them waste. Suppose the house were sold (she stood arms akimbo in front of the looking-glass) it would want seeing to–it would. There it had stood all these years without a soul in it. The books and things were mouldy, for, what with the war and help being hard to get, the house had not been cleaned as she could have wished. It was beyond one person's strength to get it straight now. She was too old. Her legs pained her. All those books needed to be laid out on the grass in the sun; there was plaster fallen in the hall; the rain-pipe had blocked over the study window and let the water in; the carpet was ruined quite. But people should come themselves; they should have sent somebody down to see. For there were clothes in the cupboards; they had left clothes in all the bedrooms. What was she to do with them? They had the moth in them–Mrs. Ramsay's things. Poor lady! She would never want *them* again. She was dead, they said; years ago, in London. There was the old grey cloak she wore gardening (Mrs. McNab fingered it). She could see her, as she came up the drive with the washing, stooping over her flowers (the garden was a pitiful sight now, all run to riot, and rabbits scuttling at you out of the beds)–she could see her with one of the children by her in that grey cloak. There were boots and shoes; and a brush and comb left on

the dressing-table, for all the world as if she expected to come back tomorrow. (She had died very sudden at the end, they said.) And once they had been coming, but had put off coming, what with the war, and travel being so difficult these days; they had never come all these years; just sent her money; but never wrote, never came, and expected to find things as they had left them, ah, dear! Why the dressing-table drawers were full of things (she pulled them open), handkerchiefs, bits of ribbon. Yes, she could see Mrs. Ramsay as she came up the drive with the washing.

“Good-evening, Mrs. McNab,” she would say.

She had a pleasant way with her. The girls all liked her. But, dear, many things had changed since then (she shut the drawer); many families had lost their dearest. So she was dead; and Mr. Andrew killed; and Miss Prue dead too, they said, with her first baby; but everyone had lost some one these years. Prices had gone up shamefully, and didn’t come down again neither. She could well remember her in her grey cloak.

“Good-evening, Mrs. McNab,” she said, and told cook to keep a plate of milk soup for her–quite thought she wanted it, carrying that heavy basket all the way up from town. She could see her now, stooping over her flowers; and faint and flickering, like a yellow beam or the circle at the end of a telescope, a lady in a grey cloak, stooping over her flowers, went wandering over the bedroom wall, up the dressing-table, across the wash-stand, as Mrs. McNab hobbled and ambled, dusting, straightening. And cook’s name now? Mildred? Marian?–some name like that. Ah, she had forgotten–she did forget things. Fiery, like all red-haired women. Many a laugh they had had. She was always welcome in the kitchen. She made them laugh, she did. Things were better then than now.

She sighed; there was too much work for one woman. She wagged her head this side and that. This had been the nursery. Why, it was all damp in here; the plaster was falling. Whatever did they want to hang a beast’s skull there? gone mouldy too. And rats in all the attics. The rain came in. But they never sent; never came. Some of the locks had gone, so the doors banged. She didn’t like to be up here at dusk alone neither. It was too much for one woman, too much, too much. She creaked, she moaned. She banged the door. She turned the key in the lock, and left the house alone, shut up, locked.

9

The house was left; the house was deserted. It was left like a shell on a sandhill to fill with dry salt grains now that life had left it. The long night seemed to have set in; the trifling airs, nibbling, the clammy breaths, fumbling, seemed to have triumphed. The saucepan had rusted and the mat decayed. Toads had nosed their way in. Idly, aimlessly, the swaying shawl swung to and fro. A thistle thrust itself between the tiles in the larder. The swallows nested in the drawing-room; the floor was strewn with straw; the plaster fell in shovelfuls; rafters were laid bare; rats carried off this and that to gnaw behind the wainscots. Tortoise-shell butterflies burst from the chrysalis and pattered their life out on the window-pane. Poppies sowed themselves among the dahlias; the lawn waved with long grass; giant artichokes towered among roses; a fringed carnation flowered among the cabbages; while the gentle tapping of a weed at the window had become, on winters' nights, a drumming from sturdy trees and thorned briars which made the whole room green in summer.

What power could now prevent the fertility, the insensibility of nature? Mrs. McNab's dream of a lady, of a child, of a plate of milk soup? It had wavered over the walls like a spot of sunlight and vanished. She had locked the door; she had gone. It was beyond the strength of one woman, she said. They never sent. They never wrote. There were things up there rotting in the drawers–it was a shame to leave them so, she said. The place was gone to rack and ruin. Only the Lighthouse beam entered the rooms for a moment, sent its sudden stare over bed and wall in the darkness of winter, looked with equanimity at the thistle and the swallow, the rat and the straw. Nothing now withstood them; nothing said no to them. Let the wind blow; let the poppy seed itself and the carnation mate with the cabbage. Let the swallow build in the drawing-room, and the thistle thrust aside the tiles, and the butterfly sun itself on the faded chintz of the arm-chairs. Let the broken glass and the china lie out on the lawn and be tangled over with grass and wild berries.

For now had come that moment, that hesitation when dawn trembles and night pauses, when if a feather alight in the scale it will be weighed down. One feather, and the house, sinking, falling, would have turned and pitched downwards to the depths of darkness. In the ruined room, picnickers would have lit their kettles; lovers sought shelter there, lying on the bare boards; and the shepherd stored his dinner on the bricks, and the tramp slept with his coat round him to ward off the cold. Then the roof would have fallen; briars and hemlocks would have blotted out path, step and window; would have grown, unequally but lustily over the mound, until some trespasser, losing his way, could have told only by a red-hot poker among the nettles, or a scrap of china in the hemlock, that here once some one had lived; there had been a house.

If the feather had fallen, if it had tipped the scale downwards, the whole house would have plunged to the depths to lie upon the sands of oblivion. But there was a force working; something not highly conscious; something that leered, something that lurched; something not inspired to go about its work with dignified ritual or solemn chanting. Mrs. McNab groaned; Mrs. Bast creaked. They were old; they were stiff; their legs ached. They came with their brooms and pails at last; they got to work. All of a sudden, would Mrs. McNab see that the house was ready, one of the young ladies wrote: would she get this done; would she get that done; all in a hurry. They might be coming for the summer; had left everything to the last; expected to find things as they had left them. Slowly and painfully, with broom and pail, mopping, scouring, Mrs. McNab, Mrs. Bast, stayed the corruption and the rot; rescued from the pool of Time that was fast closing over them now a basin, now a cupboard; fetched up from oblivion all the Waverley novels and a tea-set one morning; in the afternoon restored to sun and air a brass fender and a set of steel fire-irons. George, Mrs. Bast's son, caught the rats, and cut the grass. They had the builders. Attended with the creaking of hinges and the screeching of bolts, the slamming and banging of damp-swollen woodwork, some rusty laborious birth seemed to be taking place, as the women, stooping, rising, groaning, singing, slapped and slammed, upstairs now, now down in the cellars. Oh, they said, the work!

They drank their tea in the bedroom sometimes, or in the study; breaking off work at mid-day with the smudge on their faces, and their old hands clasped and cramped with the broom handles. Flopped on chairs, they contemplated now the magnificent conquest over taps and bath; now the more arduous, more partial triumph over long rows of books, black as ravens once, now white-stained, breeding pale mushrooms and secreting furtive spiders. Once more, as she felt the tea warm in her, the telescope fitted itself to Mrs. McNab's eyes, and in a ring of light she saw the old gentleman, lean as a rake, wagging his head, as she came up with the washing, talking to himself, she supposed, on the lawn. He never noticed her. Some said he was dead; some said she was dead. Which was it? Mrs. Bast didn't know for certain either. The young gentleman was dead. That she was sure. She had read his name in the papers.

There was the cook now, Mildred, Marian, some such name as that–a red-headed woman, quick-tempered like all her sort, but kind, too, if you knew the way with her. Many a laugh they had had together. She saved a plate of soup for Maggie; a bite of ham, sometimes; whatever was over. They lived well in those days. They had everything they wanted (glibly, jovially, with the tea hot in her, she unwound her ball of memories, sitting in the wicker arm-chair by the nursery fender).

There was always plenty doing, people in the house, twenty staying sometimes, and washing up till long past midnight.

Mrs. Bast (she had never known them; had lived in Glasgow at that time) wondered, putting her cup down, whatever they hung that beast's skull there for? Shot in foreign parts no doubt.

It might well be, said Mrs. McNab, wantoning on with her memories; they had friends in eastern countries; gentlemen staying there, ladies in evening dress; she had seen them once through the dining-room door all sitting at dinner. Twenty she dared say all in their jewellery, and she asked to stay help wash up, might be till after midnight.

Ah, said Mrs. Bast, they'd find it changed. She leant out of the window. She watched her son George scything the grass. They might well ask, what had been done to it? seeing how old Kennedy was supposed to have charge of it, and then his leg got so bad after he fell from the cart; and perhaps then no one for a year, or the better part of one; and then Davie Macdonald, and seeds might be sent, but who should say if they were ever planted? They'd find it changed.

She watched her son scything. He was a great one for work–one of those quiet ones. Well they must be getting along with the cupboards, she supposed. They hauled themselves up.

At last, after days of labour within, of cutting and digging without, dusters were flicked from the windows, the windows were shut to, keys were turned all over the house; the front door was banged; it was finished.

And now as if the cleaning and the scrubbing and the scything and the mowing had drowned it there rose that half-heard melody, that intermittent music which the ear half catches but lets fall; a bark, a bleat; irregular, intermittent, yet somehow related; the hum of an insect, the tremor of cut grass, disevered yet somehow belonging; the jar of a dorbeetle, the squeak of a wheel, loud, low, but mysteriously related; which the ear strains to bring together and is always on the verge of harmonising, but they are never quite heard, never fully harmonised, and at last, in the evening, one after another the sounds die out, and the harmony falters, and silence falls. With the sunset sharpness was lost, and like mist rising, quiet rose, quiet spread, the wind settled; loosely the world shook itself down to sleep, darkly here without a light to it, save what came green suffused through leaves, or pale on the white flowers in the bed by the window.

[Lily Briscoe had her bag carried up to the house late one evening in September. Mr. Carmichael came by the same train.]

10

Then indeed peace had come. Messages of peace breathed from the sea to the shore. Never to break its sleep any more, to lull it rather more deeply to rest, and whatever the dreamers dreamt holily, dreamt wisely, to confirm–what else was it murmuring–as Lily Briscoe laid her head on the pillow in the clean still room and heard the sea. Through the open window the voice of the beauty of the world came murmuring, too softly to hear exactly what it said–but what mattered if the meaning were plain? entreating the sleepers (the house was full again; Mrs. Beckwith was staying there, also Mr. Carmichael), if they would not actually come down to the beach itself at least to lift the blind and look out. They would see then night flowing down in purple; his head crowned; his sceptre jewelled; and how in his eyes a child might look. And if they still faltered (Lily was tired out with travelling and slept almost at once; but Mr. Carmichael read a book by candlelight), if they still said no, that it was vapour, this splendour of his, and the dew had more power than he, and they preferred sleeping; gently then without complaint, or argument, the voice would sing its song. Gently the waves would break (Lily heard them in her sleep); tenderly the light fell (it seemed to come through her eyelids). And it all looked, Mr. Carmichael thought, shutting his book, falling asleep, much as it used to look.

Indeed the voice might resume, as the curtains of dark wrapped themselves over the house, over Mrs. Beckwith, Mr. Carmichael, and Lily Briscoe so that they lay with several folds of blackness on their eyes, why not accept this, be content with this, acquiesce and resign? The sigh of all the seas breaking in measure round the isles soothed them; the night wrapped them; nothing broke their sleep, until, the birds beginning and the dawn weaving their thin voices in to its whiteness, a cart grinding, a dog somewhere barking, the sun lifted the curtains, broke the veil on their eyes, and Lily Briscoe stirring in her sleep. She clutched at her blankets as a faller clutches at the turf on the edge of a cliff. Her eyes opened wide. Here she was again, she thought, sitting bold upright in bed. Awake.

III
THE LIGHTHOUSE

1

What does it mean then, what can it all mean? Lily Briscoe asked herself, wondering whether, since she had been left alone, it behoved her to go to the kitchen to fetch another cup of coffee or wait here. What does it mean?–a catchword that was, caught up from some book, fitting her thought loosely, for she could not, this first morning with the Ramsays, contract her feelings, could only make a phrase resound to cover the blankness of her mind until these vapours had shrunk. For really, what did she feel, come back after all these years and Mrs. Ramsay dead? Nothing, nothing–nothing that she could express at all.

She had come late last night when it was all mysterious, dark. Now she was awake, at her old place at the breakfast table, but alone. It was very early too, not yet eight. There was this expedition–they were going to the Lighthouse, Mr. Ramsay, Cam, and James. They should have gone already–they had to catch the tide or something. And Cam was not ready and James was not ready and Nancy had forgotten to order the sandwiches and Mr. Ramsay had lost his temper and banged out of the room.

"What's the use of going now?" he had stormed.

Nancy had vanished. There he was, marching up and down the terrace in a rage. One seemed to hear doors slamming and voices calling all over the house. Now Nancy burst in, and asked, looking round the room, in a queer half dazed, half desperate way, "What does one send to the Lighthouse?" as if she were forcing herself to do what she despaired of ever being able to do.

What does one send to the Lighthouse indeed! At any other time Lily could have suggested reasonably tea, tobacco, newspapers. But this morning everything seemed so extraordinarily queer that a question like Nancy's–What does one send to the Lighthouse?–opened doors in one's mind that went banging and swinging to and fro and made one keep asking, in a stupefied gape, What does one send? What does one do? Why is one sitting here, after all?

Sitting alone (for Nancy went out again) among the clean cups at the long table, she felt cut off from other people, and able only to go on watching, asking, wondering. The house, the place, the morning, all seemed strangers to her. She had no attachment here, she felt, no relations with it, anything might happen, and whatever did happen, a step outside, a voice calling ("It's not in the cupboard; it's on the landing," some one cried), was a question, as if the link that usually bound things together had been cut, and they floated up here, down there, off, anyhow. How aimless it was, how chaotic, how unreal it

was, she thought, looking at her empty coffee cup. Mrs. Ramsay dead; Andrew killed; Prue dead too–repeat it as she might, it roused no feeling in her. And we all get together in a house like this on a morning like this, she said, looking out of the window. It was a beautiful still day.[140]

2

Suddenly Mr. Ramsay raised his head as he passed and looked straight at her, with his distraught wild gaze which was yet so penetrating, as if he saw you, for one second, for the first time, for ever; and she pretended to drink out of her empty coffee cup so as to escape him–to escape his demand on her, to put aside a moment longer that imperious need. And he shook his head at her, and strode on ("Alone" she heard him say, "Perished" she heard him say)[141] and like everything else this strange morning the words became symbols, wrote themselves all over the grey-green walls. If only she could put them together, she felt, write them out in some sentence, then she would have got at the truth of things. Old Mr. Carmichael came padding softly in, fetched his coffee, took his cup and made off to sit in the sun. The extraordinary unreality was frightening; but it was also exciting. Going to the Lighthouse. But what does one send to the Lighthouse? Perished. Alone. The grey-green light on the wall opposite. The empty places. Such were some of the parts, but how bring them together? she asked. As if any interruption would break the frail shape she was building on the table she turned her back to the window lest Mr. Ramsay should see her. She must escape somewhere, be alone somewhere. Suddenly she remembered. When she had sat there last ten years ago there had been a little sprig or leaf pattern on the table-cloth, which she had looked at in a moment of revelation. There had been a problem about a foreground of a picture. Move the tree to the middle, she had said. She had never finished that picture. She would paint that picture now. It had been knocking about in her mind all these years. Where were her paints, she wondered? Her paints, yes. She had left them in the hall last night. She would start at once. She got up quickly, before Mr. Ramsay turned.

She fetched herself a chair. She pitched her easel with her precise old-maidish movements on the edge of the lawn, not too close to Mr. Carmichael, but close enough for his protection. Yes, it must have been precisely here that she had stood ten years ago. There was the wall; the hedge; the tree. The question was of some relation between those masses. She had borne it in her mind all these years. It seemed

140. Note the echoes of the opening of Part One, here and throughout Part Three.

141. Mr. Ramsay is quoting from William Cowper's poem, "The Castaway" (1803), which describes a drowning sailor. The final lines are: "We perish'd, each alone: / But I, beneath a rougher sea, / And whelm'd in deeper gulphs than he."

as if the solution had come to her: she knew now what she wanted to do.

But with Mr. Ramsay bearing down on her, she could do nothing. Every time he approached–he was walking up and down the terrace–ruin approached, chaos approached. She could not paint. She stooped, she turned; she took up this rag; she squeezed that tube. But all she did was to ward him off a moment. He made it impossible for her to do anything. For if she gave him the least chance, if he saw her disengaged a moment, looking his way a moment, he would be on her, saying, as he had said last night, “You find us much changed.” Last night he had got up and stopped before her, and said that. Dumb and staring though they had all sat, the six children whom they used to call after the Kings and Queens of England–the Red, the Fair, the Wicked, the Ruthless–she felt how they raged under it. Kind old Mrs. Beckwith said something sensible. But it was a house full of unrelated passions–she had felt that all the evening. And on top of this chaos Mr. Ramsay got up, pressed her hand, and said: “You will find us much changed” and none of them had moved or had spoken; but had sat there as if they were forced to let him say it. Only James (certainly the Sullen) scowled at the lamp; and Cam screwed her handkerchief round her finger. Then he reminded them that they were going to the Lighthouse tomorrow. They must be ready, in the hall, on the stroke of half-past seven. Then, with his hand on the door, he stopped; he turned upon them. Did they not want to go? he demanded. Had they dared say No (he had some reason for wanting it) he would have flung himself tragically backwards into the bitter waters of depair. Such a gift he had for gesture. He looked like a king in exile. Doggedly James said yes. Cam stumbled more wretchedly. Yes, oh, yes, they’d both be ready, they said. And it struck her, this was tragedy–not palls, dust, and the shroud; but children coerced, their spirits subdued. James was sixteen, Cam, seventeen, perhaps. She had looked round for some one who was not there, for Mrs. Ramsay, presumably. But there was only kind Mrs. Beckwith turning over her sketches under the lamp. Then, being tired, her mind still rising and falling with the sea, the taste and smell that places have after long absence possessing her, the candles wavering in her eyes, she had lost herself and gone under. It was a wonderful night, starlit; the waves sounded as they went upstairs; the moon surprised them, enormous, pale, as they passed the staircase window. She had slept at once.

She set her clean canvas firmly upon the easel, as a barrier, frail, but she hoped sufficiently substantial to ward off Mr. Ramsay and his exactingness. She did her best to look, when his back was turned, at her picture; that line there, that mass there. But it was out of the question. Let him be fifty feet away, let him not even speak to you, let him not even see you, he permeated, he prevailed, he imposed himself. He changed everything. She could not see the colour; she

could not see the lines; even with his back turned to her, she could only think, But he'll be down on me in a moment, demanding–something she felt she could not give him. She rejected one brush; she chose another. When would those children come? When would they all be off? she fidgeted. That man, she thought, her anger rising in her, never gave; that man took. She, on the other hand, would be forced to give. Mrs. Ramsay had given. Giving, giving, giving, she had died–and had left all this. Really, she was angry with Mrs. Ramsay. With the brush slightly trembling in her fingers she looked at the hedge, the step, the wall. It was all Mrs. Ramsay's doing. She was dead. Here was Lily, at forty-four, wasting her time, unable to do a thing, standing there, playing at painting, playing at the one thing one did not play at, and it was all Mrs. Ramsay's fault. She was dead. The step where she used to sit was empty. She was dead.

But why repeat this over and over again? Why be always trying to bring up some feeling she had not got? There was a kind of blasphemy in it. It was all dry: all withered: all spent. They ought not to have asked her; she ought not to have come. One can't waste one's time at forty-four, she thought. She hated playing at painting. A brush, the one dependable thing in a world of strife, ruin, chaos–that one should not play with, knowingly even: she detested it. But he made her. You shan't touch your canvas, he seemed to say, bearing down on her, till you've given me what I want of you. Here he was, close upon her again, greedy, distraught. Well, thought Lily in despair, letting her right hand fall at her side, it would be simpler then to have it over. Surely, she could imitate from recollection the glow, the rhapsody, the self-surrender, she had seen on so many women's faces (on Mrs. Ramsay's, for instance) when on some occasion like this they blazed up–she could remember the look on Mrs. Ramsay's face–into a rapture of sympathy, of delight in the reward they had, which, though the reason of it escaped her, evidently conferred on them the most supreme bliss of which human nature was capable. Here he was, stopped by her side. She would give him what she could.

3

She seemed to have shrivelled slightly, he thought. She looked a little skimpy, wispy; but not unattractive. He liked her. There had been some talk of her marrying William Bankes once, but nothing had come of it. His wife had been fond of her. He had been a little out of temper too at breakfast. And then, and then–this was one of those moments when an enormous need urged him, without being conscious what it was, to approach any woman, to force them, he did not care how, his need was so great, to give him what he wanted: sympathy.

Was anybody looking after her? he said. Had she everything she wanted?

"Oh, thanks, everything," said Lily Briscoe nervously. No; she could not do it. She ought to have floated off instantly upon some wave of sympathetic expansion: the pressure on her was tremendous. But she remained stuck. There was an awful pause. They both looked at the sea. Why, thought Mr. Ramsay, should she look at the sea when I am here? She hoped it would be calm enough for them to land at the Lighthouse, she said. The Lighthouse! The Lighthouse! What's that got to do with it? he thought impatiently. Instantly, with the force of some primeval gust (for really he could not restrain himself any longer), there issued from him such a groan that any other woman in the whole world would have done something, said something–all except myself, thought Lily, girding at herself bitterly, who am not a woman, but a peevish, ill-tempered, dried-up old maid, presumably.

[Mr. Ramsay sighed to the full. He waited. Was she not going to say anything? Did she not see what he wanted from her? Then he said he had a particular reason for wanting to go to the Lighthouse. His wife used to send the men things. There was a poor boy with a tuberculous hip, the lightkeeper's son. He sighed profoundly. He sighed significantly. All Lily wished was that this enormous flood of grief, this insatiable hunger for sympathy, this demand that she should surrender herself up to him entirely, and even so he had sorrows enough to keep her supplied for ever, should leave her, should be diverted (she kept looking at the house, hoping for an interruption) before it swept her down in its flow.

"Such expeditions," said Mr. Ramsay, scraping the ground with his toe, "are very painful." Still Lily said nothing. (She is a stock, she is a stone, he said to himself.) "They are very exhausting," he said, looking, with a sickly look that nauseated her (he was acting, she felt, this great man was dramatising himself), at his beautiful hands. It was horrible, it was indecent. Would they never come, she asked, for she could not sustain this enormous weight of sorrow, support these heavy draperies of grief (he had assumed a pose of extreme decreptitude; he even tottered a little as he stood there) a moment longer.

Still she could say nothing; the whole horizon seemed swept bare of objects to talk about; could only feel, amazedly, as Mr. Ramsay stood there, how his gaze seemed to fall dolefully over the sunny grass and discolour it, and cast over the rubicund, drowsy, entirely contented figure of Mr. Carmichael, reading a French novel on a deck-chair, a veil of crape, as if such an existence, flaunting its prosperity in a world

of woe, were enough to provoke the most dismal thoughts of all. Look at him, he seemed to be saying, look at me; and indeed, all the time he was feeling, Think of me, think of me. Ah, could that bulk only be wafted alongside of them, Lily wished; had she only pitched her easel a yard or two closer to him; a man, any man, would staunch this effusion, would stop these lamentations. A woman, she had provoked this horror; a woman, she should have known how to deal with it. It was immensely to her discredit, sexually, to stand there dumb. One said–what did one say?–Oh, Mr. Ramsay! Dear Mr. Ramsay! That was what that kind old lady who sketched, Mrs. Beckwith, would have said instantly, and rightly. But, no. They stood there, isolated from the rest of the world. His immense self-pity, his demand for sympathy poured and spread itself in pools at ther feet, and all she did, miserable sinner that she was, was to draw her skirts a little closer round her ankles, lest she should get wet. In complete silence she stood there, grasping her paint brush.

Heaven could never be sufficiently praised! She heard sounds in the house. James and Cam must be coming. But Mr. Ramsay, as if he knew that his time ran short, exerted upon her solitary figure the immense pressure of his concentrated woe; his age; his frailty: his desolation; when suddenly, tossing his head impatiently, in his annoyance–for after all, what woman could resist him?–he noticed that his boot-laces were untied. Remarkable boots they were too, Lily thought, looking down at them: sculptured; colossal; like everything that Mr. Ramsay wore, from his frayed tie to his half-buttoned waistcoat, his own indisputably. She could see them walking to his room of their own accord, expressive in his absence of pathos, surliness, ill-temper, charm.

“What beautiful boots!” she exclaimed. She was ashamed of herself. To praise his boots when he asked her to solace his soul; when he had shown her his bleeding hands, his lacerated heart, and asked her to pity them, then to say, cheerfully, “Ah, but what beautiful boots you wear!” deserved, she knew, and she looked up expecting to get it in one of his sudden roars of ill-temper complete annihilation.

Instead, Mr. Ramsay smiled. His pall, his draperies, his infirmities fell from him. Ah, yes, he said, holding his foot up for her to look at, they were first-rate boots. There was only one man in England who could make boots like that. Boots are among the chief curses of mankind, he said. “Bootmakers make it their business,” he exclaimed, “to cripple and torture the human foot.” They are also the most obstinate and perverse of mankind. It had taken him the best part of his youth to get boots made as they should be made. He would have her observe (he lifted his right foot and then his left) that she had never seen boots made quite that shape before. They were made of the finest

leather in the world, also. Most leather was mere brown paper and cardboard. He looked complacently at his foot, still held in the air. They had reached, she felt, a sunny island where peace dwelt, sanity reigned and the sun for ever shone, the blessed island of good boots. Her heart warmed to him. "Now let me see if you can tie a knot," he said. He poohpoohed her feeble system. He showed her his own invention. Once you tied it, it never came undone. Three times he knotted her shoe; three times he unknotted it.

Why, at this completely inappropriate moment, when he was stooping over her shoe, should she be so tormented with sympathy for him that, as she stooped too, the blood rushed to her face, and, thinking of her callousness (she had called him a play-actor) she felt her eyes swell and tingle with tears? Thus occupied he seemed to her a figure of infinite pathos. He tied knots. He bought boots. There was no helping Mr. Ramsay on the journey he was going. But now just as she wished to say something, could have said something, perhaps, here they were–Cam and James. They appeared on the terrace. They came, lagging, side by side, a serious, melancholy couple.

But why was it like *that* that they came? She could not help feeling annoyed with them; they might have come more cheerfully; they might have given him what, now that they were off, she would not have the chance of giving him. For she felt a sudden emptiness; a frustration. Her feeling had come too late; there it was ready; but he no longer needed it. He had become a very distinguished, elderly man, who had no need of her whatsoever. She felt snubbed. He slung a knapsack round his shoulders. He shared out the parcels–there were a number of them, ill tied in brown paper. He sent Cam for a cloak. He had all the appearance of a leader making ready for an expedition. Then, wheeling about, he led the way with his firm military tread, in those wonderful boots, carrying brown paper parcels, down the path, his children following him. They looked, she thought, as if fate had devoted them to some stern enterprise, and they went to it, still young enough to be drawn acquiescent in their father's wake, obediently, but with a pallor in their eyes which made her feel that they suffered something beyond their years in silence. So they passed the edge of the lawn, and it seemed to Lily that she watched a procession go, drawn on by some stress of common feeling which made it, faltering and flagging as it was, a little company bound together and strangely impressive to her. Politely, but very distantly, Mr. Ramsay raised his hand and saluted her as they passed.

But what a face, she thought, immediately finding the sympathy which she had not been asked to give troubling her for expression. What had made it like that? Thinking, night after night, she supposed–about the reality of kitchen tables, she added, remembering the symbol which

in her vagueness as to what Mr. Ramsay did think about Andrew had given her. (He had been killed by the splinter of a shell instantly, she bethought her.) The kitchen table was something visionary, austere; something bare, hard, not ornamental. There was no colour to it; it was all edges and angles; it was uncompromisingly plain. But Mr. Ramsay kept always his eyes fixed upon it, never allowed himself to be distracted or deluded, until his face became worn too and ascetic and partook of this unornamented beauty which so deeply impressed her. Then, she recalled (standing where he had left her, holding her brush), worries had fretted it–not so nobly. He must have had his doubts about that table, she supposed; whether the table was a real table; whether it was worth the time he gave to it; whether he was able after all to find it. He had had doubts, she felt, or he would have asked less of people. That was what they talked about late at night sometimes, she suspected; and then next day Mrs. Ramsay looked tired, and Lily flew into a rage with him over some absurd little thing. But now he had nobody to talk to about that table, or his boots, or his knots; and he was like a lion seeking whom he could devour, and his face had that touch of desperation, of exaggeration in it which alarmed her, and made her pull her skirts about her. And then, she recalled, there was that sudden revivification, that sudden flare (when she praised his boots), that sudden recovery of vitality and interest in ordinary human things, which too passed and changed (for he was always changing, and hid nothing) into that other final phase which was new to her and had, she owned, made herself ashamed of her own irritability, when it seemed as if he had shed worries and ambitions, and the hope of sympathy and the desire for praise, had entered some other region, was drawn on, as if by curiosity, in dumb colloquy, whether with himself or another, at the head of that little procession out of one's range. An extraordinary face! The gate banged.

4

So they're gone, she thought, sighing with relief and disappointment. Her sympathy seemed to be cast back on her, like a bramble sprung across her face. She felt curiously divided, as if one part of her were drawn out there–it was a still day, hazy; the Lighthouse looked this morning at an immense distance; the other had fixed itself doggedly, solidly, here on the lawn. She saw her canvas as if it had floated up and placed itself white and uncompromising directly before her. It seemed to rebuke her with its cold stare for all this hurry and agitation; this folly and waste of emotion; it drastically recalled her and spread through her mind first a peace, as her disorderly sensations (he had gone and she had been so sorry for him and she had said nothing) trooped off the field; and then, emptiness. She looked

blankly at the canvas, with its uncompromising white stare; from the canvas to the garden. There was something (she stood screwing up her little Chinese eyes in her small puckered face), something she remembered in the relations of those lines cutting across, slicing down, and in the mass of the hedge with its green cave of blues and browns, which had stayed in her mind; which had tied a knot in her mind so that at odds and ends of time, involuntarily, as she walked along the Brompton Road,[142] as she brushed her hair, she found herself painting that picture, passing her eye over it, and untying the knot in imagination. But there was all the difference in the world between this planning airily away from the canvas and actually taking her brush and making the first mark.

She had taken the wrong brush in her agitation at Mr. Ramsay's presence, and her easel, rammed into the earth so nervously, was at the wrong angle. And now that she had got that right, and in so doing had subdued the impertinences and irrelevances that plucked her attention and made her remember how she was such and such a person, had such and such relations to people, she took her hand and raised her brush. For a moment it stayed trembling in a painful but exciting ecstasy in the air. Where to begin?–that was the question at what point to make the first mark? One line placed on the canvas committed her to innumerable risks, to frequent and irrevocable decisions. All that in idea seemed simple became in practice immediately complex; as the waves shape themselves symmetrically from the cliff top, but to the swimmer among them are divided by steep gulfs, and foaming crests. Still the risk must be run; the mark made.

With a curious physical sensation, as if she were urged forward and at the same time must hold herself back, she made her first quick decisive stroke. The brush descended. It flickered brown over the white canvas; it left a running mark. A second time she did it–a third time. And so pausing and so flickering, she attained a dancing rhythmical movement, as if the pauses were one part of the rhythm and the strokes another, and all were related; and so, lightly and swiftly pausing, striking, she scored her canvas with brown running nervous lines which had no sooner settled there than they enclosed (she felt it looming out at her) a space. Down in the hollow of one wave she saw the next wave towering higher and higher above her. For what could be more formidable than that space? Here she was again, she thought, stepping back to look at it, drawn out of gossip, out of living, out of community with people into the presence of this formidable ancient enemy of hers–this other thing, this truth, this reality, which suddenly laid hands on her, emerged stark at the back of appearances and commanded her attention. She was half unwilling, half reluctant.

142. Lily's home in London; see note 27.

Why always be drawn out and haled away? Why not left in peace, to talk to Mr. Carmichael on the lawn? It was an exacting form of intercourse anyhow. Other worshipful objects were content with worship; men, women, God, all let one kneel prostrate; but this form, were it only the shape of a white lamp-shade looming on a wicker table, roused one to perpetual combat, challenged one to a fight in which one was bound to be worsted. Always (it was in her nature, or in her sex, she did not know which) before she exchanged the fluidity of life for the concentration of painting she had a few moments of nakedness when she seemed like an unborn soul, a soul reft of body, hesitating on some windy pinnacle and exposed without protection to all the blasts of doubt. Why then did she do it? She looked at the canvas, lightly scored with running lines. It would be hung in the servants' bedrooms. It would be rolled up and stuffed under a sofa. What was the good of doing it then, and she heard some voice saying she couldn't paint, saying she couldn't create, as if she were caught up in one of those habitual currents in which after a certain time experience forms in the mind, so that one repeats words without being aware any longer who originally spoke them.

Can't paint, can't write, she murmured monotonously, anxiously considering what her plan of attack should be. For the mass loomed before her; it protruded; she felt it pressing on her eyeballs. Then, as if some juice necessary for the lubrication of her faculties were spontaneously squirted, she began precariously dipping among the blues and umbers, moving her brush hither and thither, but it was now heavier and went slower, as if it had fallen in with some rhythm which was dictated to her (she kept looking at the hedge, at the canvas) by what she rhythm was strong enough to bear her along with it on its current. Certainly she was losing consciousness of outer things. And as she lost consciousness of outer things, and her name and her personality and her appearance, and whether Mr. Carmichael was there or not, her mind kept throwing up from its depths, scenes, and names, and sayings, and memories and ideas, like a fountain spurting over that glaring, hideously difficult white space, while she modelled it with greens and blues.

Charles Tansley used to say that, she remembered, women can't paint, can't write. Coming up behind her, he had stood close beside her, a thing she hated, as she painted her on this very spot. "Shag tobacco,"[143] he said, "fivepence an ounce," parading his poverty, his principles. (But the war had drawn the sting of her femininity. Poor devils, one thought, poor devils, of both sexes.)[144] He was always carrying a book about under his arm–a purple book. He "worked." He sat, she

143. A cheap type of tobacco; see note 13..

144. Another brief reference to the changes brought about by the First World War, and to Woolf's vision of the problems brought about by traditional gender roles.

remembered, working in a blaze of sun. At dinner he would sit right in the middle of the view. But after all, she reflected, there was the scene on the beach. One must remember that. It was a windy morning. They had all gone down to the beach. Mrs. Ramsay sat down and wrote letters by a rock. She wrote and wrote. "Oh," she said, looking up at something floating in the sea, "is it a lobster pot? Is it an upturned boat?" She was so short-sighted that she could not see, and then Charles Tansley became as nice as he could possibly be. He began playing ducks and drakes. They chose little flat black stones and sent them skipping over the waves. Every now and then Mrs. Ramsay looked up over her spectacles and laughed at them. What they said she could not remember, but only she and Charles throwing stones and getting on very well all of a sudden and Mrs. Ramsay watching them. She was highly conscious of that. Mrs. Ramsay, she thought, stepping back and screwing up her eyes. (It must have altered the design a good deal when she was sitting on the step with James. There must have been a shadow.) When she thought of herself and Charles throwing ducks and drakes and of the whole scene on the beach, it seemed to depend somehow upon Mrs. Ramsay sitting under the rock, with a pad on her knee, writing letters. (She wrote innumerable letters, and sometimes the wind took them and she and Charles just saved a page from the sea.) But what a power was in the human soul! she thought. That woman sitting there writing under the rock resolved everything into simplicity; made these angers, irritations fall off like old rags; she brought together this and that and then this, and so made out of that miserable silliness and spite (she and Charles squabbling, sparring, had been silly and spiteful) something–this scene on the beach for example, this moment of friendship and liking–which survived, after all these years complete, so that she dipped into it to re-fashion her memory of him, and there it stayed in the mind affecting one almost like a work of art.

"Like a work of art," she repeated, looking from her canvas to the drawing-room steps and back again. She must rest for a moment. And, resting, looking from one to the other vaguely, the old question which traversed the sky of the soul perpetually, the vast, the general question which was apt to particularise itself at such moments as these, when she released faculties that had been on the strain, stood over her, paused over her, darkened over her. What is the meaning of life? That was all–a simple question; one that tended to close in on one with years. The great revelation had never come. The great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark; here was one. This, that, and the other; herself and Charles Tansley and the breaking wave; Mrs. Ramsay bringing them together; Mrs. Ramsay saying, "Life stand still here"; Mrs. Ramsay making of the moment something permanent (as in another sphere Lily herself tried to make of the moment something permanent)–this was of the nature

of a revelation. In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing (she looked at the clouds going and the leaves shaking) was struck into stability. Life stand still here, Mrs. Ramsay said. “Mrs. Ramsay! Mrs. Ramsay!” she repeated. She owed it all to her.

All was silence. Nobody seemed yet to be stirring in the house. She looked at it there sleeping in the early sunlight with its windows green and blue with the reflected leaves. The faint thought she was thinking of Mrs. Ramsay seemed in consonance with this quiet house; this smoke; this fine early morning air. Faint and unreal, it was amazingly pure and exciting. She hoped nobody would open the window or come out of the house, but that she might be left alone to go on thinking, to go on painting. She turned to her canvas. But impelled by some curiosity, driven by the discomfort of the sympathy which she held undischarged, she walked a pace or so to the end of the lawn to see whether, down there on the beach, she could see that little company setting sail. Down there among the little boats which floated, some with their sails furled, some slowly, for it was very calm moving away, there was one rather apart from the others. The sail was even now being hoisted. She decided that there in that very distant and entirely silent little boat Mr. Ramsay was sitting with Cam and James. Now they had got the sail up; now after a little flagging and silence, she watched the boat take its way with deliberation past the other boats out to sea.

5

The sails flapped over their heads. The water chuckled and slapped the sides of the boat, which drowsed motionless in the sun. Now and then the sails rippled with a little breeze in them, but the ripple ran over them and ceased. The boat made no motion at all. Mr. Ramsay sat in the middle of the boat. He would be impatient in a moment, James thought, and Cam thought, looking at her father, who sat in the middle of the boat between them (James steered; Cam sat alone in the bow) with his legs tightly curled. He hated hanging about. Sure enough, after fidgeting a second or two, he said something sharp to Macalister’s boy, who got out his oars and began to row. But their father, they knew, would never be content until they were flying along. He would keep looking for a breeze, fidgeting, saying things under his breath, which Macalister and and Macalister’s boy would overhear, and they would both be made horribly uncomfortable. He had made them come. He had forced them to come. In their anger they hoped that the breeze would never rise, that he might be thwarted in every possible way, since he had forced them to come against their wills.

All the way down to the beach they had lagged behind together, though

he bade them "Walk up, walk up," without speaking. Their heads were bent down, their heads were pressed down by some remorseless gale. Speak to him they could not. They must come; they must follow. They must walk behind him carrying brown paper parcels. But they vowed, in silence, as they walked, to stand by each other and carry out the great compact–to resist tyranny to the death. So there they would sit, one at one end of the boat, one at the other, in silence. They would say nothing, only look at him now and then where he sat with his legs twisted, frowning and fidgeting, and pishing and pshawing and muttering things to himself, and waiting impatiently for a breeze. And they hoped it would be calm. They hoped he would be thwarted. They hoped the whole expedition would fail, and they would have to put back, with their parcels, to the beach.

But now, when Macalister's boy had rowed a little way out, the sails slowly swung round, the boat quickened itself, flattened itself, and shot off. Instantly, as if some great strain had been relieved, Mr. Ramsay uncurled his legs, took out his tobacco pouch, handed it with a little grunt to Macalister, and felt, they knew, for all they suffered, perfectly content. Now they would sail on for hours like this, and Mr. Ramsay would ask old Macalister a question–about the great storm last winter probably–and old Macalister would answer it, and they would puff their pipes together, and Macalister would take a tarry rope in his fingers, tying or untying some knot, and the boy would fish, and never say a word to any one. James would be forced to keep his eye all the time on the sail. For if he forgot, then the sail puckered and shivered, and the boat slackened, and Mr. Ramsay would say sharply, "Look out! Look out!" and old Macalister would turn slowly on his seat. So they heard Mr. Ramsay asking some question about the great storm at Christmas. "She comes driving round the point," old Macalister said, describing the great storm last Christmas, when ten ships had been driven into the bay for shelter, and he had seen "one there, one there, one there" (he pointed slowly round the bay. Mr. Ramsay followed him, turning his head). He had seen four men clinging to the mast. Then she was gone. "And at last we shoved her off," he went on (but in their anger and their silence they only caught a word here and there, sitting at opposite ends of the boat, united by their compact to fight tyranny to the death). At last they had shoved her off, they had launched the lifeboat, and they had got her out past the point–Macalister told the story; and though they only caught a word here and there, they were conscious all the time of their father–how he leant forward, how he brought his voice into tune with Macalister's voice; how, puffing at his pipe, and looking there and there where Macalister pointed, he relished the thought of the storm and the dark night and the fishermen striving there. He liked that men should labour and sweat on the windy beach at night; pitting muscle and brain against the waves and the wind; he liked men to work like that,

and women to keep house, and sit beside sleeping children indoors, while men were drowned, out there in a storm. So James could tell, so Cam could tell (they looked at him, they looked at each other), from his toss and his vigilance and the ring in his voice, and the little tinge of Scottish accent which came into his voice, making him seem like a peasant himself, as he questioned Macalister about the eleven ships that had been driven into the bay in a storm. Three had sunk.

He looked proudly where Macalister pointed; and Cam thought, feeling proud of him without knowing quite why, had he been there he would have launched the lifeboat, he would have reached the wreck, Cam thought. He was so brave, he was so adventurous, Cam thought. But she remembered. There was the compact; to resist tyranny to the death. Their grievance weighed them down. They had been forced; they had been bidden. He had borne them down once more with his gloom and his authority, making them do his bidding, on this fine morning, come, because he wished it, carrying these parcels, to the Lighthouse; take part in these rites he went through for his own pleasure in memory of dead people, which they hated, so that they lagged after him, all the pleasure of the day was spoilt.

Yes, the breeze was freshening. The boat was leaning, the water was sliced sharply and fell away in green cascades, in bubbles, in cataracts. Cam looked down into the foam, into the sea with all its treasure in it, and its speed hypnotised her, and the tie between her and James sagged a little. It slackened a little. She began to think, How fast it goes. Where are we going? and the movement hypnotised her, while James, with his eye fixed on the sail and on the horizon, steered grimly. But he began to think as he steered that he might escape; he might be quit of it all. They might land somewhere; and be free then. Both of them, looking at each other for a moment, had a sense of escape and exaltation, what with the speed and the change. But the breeze bred in Mr. Ramsay too the same excitement, and, as old Macalister turned to fling his line overboard, he cried out aloud,

“We perished,” and then again, “each alone.”[145] And then with his usual spasm of repentance or shyness, pulled himself up, and waved his hand towards the shore.

“See the little house,” he said pointing, wishing Cam to look. She raised herself reluctantly and looked. But which was it? She could no longer make out, there on the hillside, which was their house. All looked distant and peaceful and strange. The shore seemed refined, far away, unreal. Already the little distance they had sailed had put them far from it and given it the changed look, the composed look, of

145. Cowper; see note 113.

something receding in which one has no longer any part. Which was their house? She could not see it.

"But I beneath a rougher sea,"[146] Mr. Ramsay murmured. He had found the house and so seeing it, he had also seen himself there; he had seen himself walking on the terrace, alone. He was walking up and down between the urns; and he seemed to himself very old and bowed. Sitting in the boat, he bowed, he crouched himself, acting instantly his part–the part of a desolate man, widowed, bereft; and so called up before him in hosts people sympathising with him; staged for himself as he sat in the boat, a little drama; which required of him decrepitude and exhaustion and sorrow (he raised his hands and looked at the thinness of them, to confirm his dream) and then there was given him in abundance women's sympathy, and he imagined how they would soothe him and sympathise with him, and so getting in his dream some reflection of the exquisite pleasure women's sympathy was to him, he sighed and said gently and mournfully:

But I beneath a rougher sea
Was whelmed in deeper gulfs than he,

so that the mournful words were heard quite clearly by them all. Cam half started on her seat. It shocked her–it outraged her. The movement roused her father; and he shuddered, and broke off, exclaiming: "Look! Look!" so urgently that James also turned his head to look over his shoulder at the island. They all looked. They looked at the island.

But Cam could see nothing. She was thinking how all those paths and the lawn, thick and knotted with the lives they had lived there, were gone: were rubbed out; were past; were unreal, and now this was real; the boat and the sail with its patch; Macalister with his earrings; the noise of the waves–all this was real. Thinking this, she was murmuring to herself, "We perished, each alone,"[147] for her father's words broke and broke again in her mind, when her father, seeing her gazing so vaguely, began to tease her. Didn't she know the points of the compass? he asked. Didn't she know the North from the South? Did she really think they lived right out there? And he pointed again, and showed her where their house was, there, by those trees. He wished she would try to be more accurate, he said: "Tell me–which is East, which is West?" he said, half laughing at her, half scolding her, for he could not understand the state of mind of any one, not absolutely

146. Cowper; see note 113.
147. This and the offset lines above are from Cowper; see note 113.

imbecile, who did not know the points of the compass. Yet she did not know. And seeing her gazing, with her vague, now rather frightened, eyes fixed where no house was Mr. Ramsay forgot his dream; how he walked up and down between the urns on the terrace; how the arms were stretched out to him. He thought, women are always like that; the vagueness of their minds is hopeless; it was a thing he had never been able to understand; but so it was. It had been so with her–his wife. They could not keep anything clearly fixed in their minds. But he had been wrong to be angry with her; moreover, did he not rather like this vagueness in women? It was part of their extraordinary charm. I will make her smile at me, he thought. She looks frightened. She was so silent. He clutched his fingers, and determined that his voice and his face and all the quick expressive gestures which had been at his command making people pity him and praise him all these years should subdue themselves. He would make her smile at him. He would find some simple easy thing to say to her. But what? For, wrapped up in his work as he was, he forgot the sort of thing one said. There was a puppy. They had a puppy. Who was looking after the puppy today? he asked. Yes, thought James pitilessly, seeing his sister's head against the sail, now she will give way. I shall be left to fight the tyrant alone. The compact would be left to him to carry out. Cam would never resist tyranny to the death, he thought grimly, watching her face, sad, sulky, yielding. And as sometimes happens when a cloud falls on a green hillside and gravity descends and there among all the surrounding hills is gloom and sorrow, and it seems as if the hills themselves must ponder the fate of the clouded, the darkened, either in pity, or maliciously rejoicing in her dismay: so Cam now felt herself overcast, as she sat there among calm, resolute people and wondered how to answer her father about the puppy; how to resist his entreaty–forgive me, care for me; while James the lawgiver, with the tablets of eternal wisdom laid open on his knee (his hand on the tiller had become symbolical to her), said, Resist him. Fight him. He said so rightly; justly. For they must fight tyranny to the death, she thought. Of all human qualities she reverenced justice most. Her brother was most god-like, her father most suppliant. And to which did she yield, she thought, sitting between them, gazing at the shore whose points were all unknown to her, and thinking how the lawn and the terrace and the house were smoothed away now and peace dwelt there.

"Jasper," she said sullenly. He'd look after the puppy.

And what was she going to call him? her father persisted. He had had a dog when he was a little boy, called Frisk. She'll give way, James thought, as he watched a look come upon her face, a look he remembered. They look down he thought, at their knitting or something. Then suddenly they look up. There was a flash of blue, he remembered, and then somebody sitting with him laughed, surrendered, and he was very

angry. It must have been his mother, he thought, sitting on a low chair, with his father standing over her. He began to search among the infinite series of impressions which time had laid down, leaf upon leaf, fold upon fold softly, incessantly upon his brain; among scents, sounds; voices, harsh, hollow, sweet; and lights passing, and brooms tapping; and the wash and hush of the sea, how a man had marched up and down and stopped dead, upright, over them. Meanwhile, he noticed, Cam dabbled her fingers in the water, and stared at the shore and said nothing. No, she won't give way, he thought; she's different, he thought. Well, if Cam would not answer him, he would not bother her Mr. Ramsay decided, feeling in his pocket for a book. But she would answer him; she wished, passionately, to move some obstacle that lay upon her tongue and to say, Oh, yes, Frisk. I'll call him Frisk. She wanted even to say, Was that the dog that found its way over the moor alone? But try as she might, she could think of nothing to say like that, fierce and loyal to the compact, yet passing on to her father, unsuspected by James, a private token of the love she felt for him. For she thought, dabbling her hand (and now Macalister's boy had caught a mackerel, and it lay kicking on the floor, with blood on its gills) for she thought, looking at James who kept his eyes dispassionately on the sail, or glanced now and then for a second at the horizon, you're not exposed to it, to this pressure and division of feeling, this extraordinary temptation. Her father was feeling in his pockets; in another second, he would have found his book. For no one attracted her more; his hands were beautiful, and his feet, and his voice, and his words, and his haste, and his temper, and his oddity, and his passion, and his saying straight out before every one, we perish, each alone, and his remoteness. (He had opened his book.) But what remained intolerable, she thought, sitting upright, and watching Macalister's boy tug the hook out of the gills of another fish, was that crass blindness and tyranny of his which had poisoned her childhood and raised bitter storms, so that even now she woke in the night trembling with rage and remembered some command of his; some insolence: "Do this," "Do that," his dominance: his "Submit to me."

So she said nothing, but looked doggedly and sadly at the shore, wrapped in its mantle of peace; as if the people there had fallen asleep, she thought; were free like smoke, were free to come and go like ghosts. They have no suffering there, she thought.

6

Yes, that is their boat, Lily Briscoe decided, standing on the edge of the lawn. It was the boat with greyish-brown sails, which she saw now flatten itself upon the water and shoot off across the bay. There he

sits, she thought, and the children are quite silent still. And she could not reach him either. The sympathy she had not given him weighed her down. It made it difficult for her to paint.

She had always found him difficult. She never had been able to praise him to his face, she remembered. And that reduced their relationship to something neutral, without that element of sex in it which made his manner to Minta so gallant, almost gay. He would pick a flower for her, lend her his books. But could he believe that Minta read them? She dragged them about the garden, sticking in leaves to mark the place.

"D'you remember, Mr. Carmichael?" she was inclined to ask, looking at the old man. But he had pulled his hat half over his forehead; he was asleep, or he was dreaming, or he was lying there catching words, she supposed.

"D'you remember?" she felt inclined to ask him as she passed him, thinking again of Mrs. Ramsay on the beach; the cask bobbing up and down; and the pages flying. Why, after all these years had that survived, ringed round, lit up, visible to the last detail, with all before it blank and all after it blank, for miles and miles?

"Is it a boat? Is it a cork?" she would say, Lily repeated, turning back, reluctantly again, to her canvas. Heaven be praised for it, the problem of space remained, she thought, taking up her brush again. It glared at her. The whole mass of the picture was poised upon that weight. Beautiful and bright it should be on the surface, feathery and evanescent, one colour melting into another like the colours on a butterfly's wing; but beneath the fabric must be clamped together with bolts of iron. It was to be a thing you could ruffle with your breath; and a thing you could not dislodge with a team of horses.[148] And she began to lay on a red, a grey, and she began to model her way into the hollow there. At the same time, she seemed to be sitting beside Mrs. Ramsay on the beach.

"Is it a boat? Is it a cask?" Mrs. Ramsay said. And she began hunting round for her spectacles. And she sat, having found them, silent, looking out to sea. And Lily, painting steadily, felt as if a door had opened, and one went in and stood gazing silently about in a high cathedral-like place, very dark, very solemn. Shouts came from a world far away. Steamers vanished in stalks of smoke on the horizon. Charles threw stones and sent them skipping.

Mrs. Ramsay sat silent. She was glad, Lily thought, to rest in silence,

148. Compare Lily's vision of her work with her earlier view (see note 62) and with Mrs. Ramsay's vision of male and female (note 113).

uncommunicative; to rest in the extreme obscurity of human relationships. Who knows what we are, what we feel? Who knows even at the moment of intimacy, This is knowledge? Aren't things spoilt then, Mrs. Ramsay may have asked (it seemed to have happened so often, this silence by her side) by saying them? Aren't we more expressive thus? The moment at least seemed extraordinarily fertile. She rammed a little hole in the sand and covered it up, by way of burying in it the perfection of the moment. It was like a drop of silver in which one dipped and illumined the darkness of the past.

Lily stepped back to get her canvas–so–into perspective. It was an odd road to be walking, this of painting. Out and out one went, further, until at last one seemed to be on a narrow plank, perfectly alone, over the sea. And as she dipped into the blue paint, she dipped too into the past there. Now Mrs. Ramsay got up, she remembered. It was time to go back to the house–time for luncheon. And they all walked up from the beach together, she walking behind with William Bankes, and there was Minta in front of them with a hole in her stocking. How that little round hole of pink heel seemed to flaunt itself before them! How William Bankes deplored it, without, so far as she could remember, saying anything about it! It meant to him the annihilation of womanhood, and dirt and disorder, and servants leaving and beds not made at mid-day–all the things he most abhorred. He had a way of shuddering and spreading his fingers out as if to cover an unsightly object which he did now–holding his hand in front of him. And Minta walked on ahead, and presumably Paul met her and she went off with Paul in the garden.

The Rayleys, thought Lily Briscoe, squeezing her tube of green paint. She collected her impressions of the Rayleys. Their lives appeared to her in a series of scenes; one, on the staircase at dawn. Paul had come in and gone to bed early; Minta was late. There was Minta, wreathed, tinted, garish on the stairs about three o'clock in the morning. Paul came out in his pyjamas carrying a poker in case of burglars. Minta was eating a sandwich, standing half-way up by a window, in the cadaverous early morning light, and the carpet had a hole in it. But what did they say? Lily asked herself, as if by looking she could hear them. Minta went on eating her sandwich, annoyingly, while he spoke something violent, abusing her, in a mutter so as not to wake the children, the two little boys. He was withered, drawn; she flamboyant, careless. For things had worked loose after the first year or so; the marriage had turned out rather badly.

And this, Lily thought, taking the green paint on her brush, this making up scenes about them, is what we call "knowing" people, "thinking" of them, "being fond" of them! Not a word of it was true; she had made it up; but it was what she knew them by all the same. She

went on tunnelling her way into her picture, into the past.

Another time, Paul said he "played chess in coffee-houses." She had built up a whole structure of imagination on that saying too. She remembered how, as he said it, she thought how he rang up the servant, and she said, "Mrs. Rayley's out, sir," and he decided that he would not come home either. She saw him sitting in the corner of some lugubrious place where the smoke attached itself to the red plush seats, and the waitresses got to know you, and he played chess with a little man who was in the tea trade and lived at Surbiton,[149] but that was all Paul knew about him. And then Minta was out when he came home and then there was that scene on the stairs, when he got the poker in case of burglars (no doubt to frighten her too) and spoke so bitterly, saying she had ruined his life. At any rate when she went down to see them at a cottage near Rickmansworth,[150] things were horribly strained. Paul took her down the garden to look at the Belgian hares which he bred, and Minta followed them, singing, and put her bare arm on his shoulder, lest he should tell her anything.

Minta was bored by hares, Lily thought. But Minta never gave herself away. She never said things like that about playing chess in coffee-houses. She was far too conscious, far too wary. But to go on with their story–they had got through the dangerous stage by now. She had been staying with them last summer some time and the car broke down and Minta had to hand him his tools. He sat on the road mending the car, and it was the way she gave him the tools–business-like, straightforward, friendly–that proved it was all right now. They were "in love" no longer; no, he had taken up with another woman, a serious woman, with her hair in a plait and a case in her hand (Minta had described her gratefully, almost admiringly), who went to meetings and shared Paul's views (they had got more and more pronounced) about the taxation of land values and a capital levy. Far from breaking up the marriage, that alliance had righted it. They were excellent friends, obviously, as he sat on the road and she handed him his tools.

So that was the story of the Rayleys, Lily thought. She imagined herself telling it to Mrs. Ramsay, who would be full of curiosity to know what had become of the Rayleys. She would feel a little triumphant, telling Mrs. Ramsay that the marriage had not been a success.

But the dead, thought Lily, encountering some obstacle in her design which made her pause and ponder, stepping back a foot or so, oh, the dead! she murmured, one pitied them, one brushed them aside, one had

149. Then a relatively new suburb of London.
150. A small commuter town northwest of London.

even a little contempt for them. They are at our mercy. Mrs. Ramsay has faded and gone, she thought. We can over-ride her wishes, improve away her limited, old-fashioned ideas. She recedes further and further from us. Mockingly she seemed to see her there at the end of the corridor of years saying, of all incongruous things, “Marry, marry!” (sitting very upright early in the morning with the birds beginning to cheep in the garden outside). And one would have to say to her, It has all gone against your wishes. They’re happy like that; I’m happy like this. Life has changed completely. At that all her being, even her beauty, became for a moment, dusty and out of date. For a moment Lily, standing there, with the sun hot on her back, summing up the Rayleys, triumphed over Mrs. Ramsay, who would never know how Paul went to coffee-houses and had a mistress; how he sat on the ground and Minta handed him his tools; how she stood here painting, had never married, not even William Bankes.

Mrs. Ramsay had planned it. Perhaps, had she lived, she would have compelled it. Already that summer he was “the kindest of men.” He was “the first scientist of his age, my husband says.” He was also “poor William–it makes me so unhappy, when I go to see him, to find nothing nice in his house–no one to arrange the flowers.” So they were sent for walks together, and she was told, with that faint touch of irony that made Mrs. Ramsay slip through one’s fingers, that she had a scientific mind; she liked flowers; she was so exact. What was this mania of hers for marriage? Lily wondered, stepping to and fro from her easel.

(Suddenly, as suddenly as a star slides in the sky, a reddish light seemed to burn in her mind, covering Paul Rayley, issuing from him. It rose like a fire sent up in token of some celebration by savages on a distant beach. She heard the roar and the crackle. The whole sea for miles round ran red and gold. Some winey smell mixed with it and intoxicated her, for she felt again her own headlong desire to throw herself off the cliff and be drowned looking for a pearl brooch on a beach. And the roar and the crackle repelled her with fear and disgust, as if while she saw its splendour and power she saw too how it fed on the treasure of the house, greedily, disgustingly, and she loathed it. But for a sight, for a glory it surpassed everything in her experience, and burnt year after year like a signal fire on a desert island at the edge of the sea, and one had only to say “in love” and instantly, as happened now, up rose Paul’s fire again. And it sank and she said to herself, laughing, “The Rayleys”; how Paul went to coffee-houses and played chess.)

She had only escaped by the skin of her teeth though, she thought. She had been looking at the table-cloth, and it had flashed upon her that she would move the tree to the middle, and need never marry anybody,

and she had felt an enormous exultation. She had felt, now she could stand up to Mrs. Ramsay–a tribute to the astonishing power that Mrs. Ramsay had over one. Do this, she said, and one did it. Even her shadow at the window with James was full of authority. She remembered how William Bankes had been shocked by her neglect of the significance of mother and son. Did she not admire their beauty? he said. But William, she remembered, had listened to her with his wise child's eyes when she explained how it was not irreverence: how a light there needed a shadow there and so on. She did not intend to disparage a subject which, they agreed, Raphael[151] had treated divinely. She was not cynical. Quite the contrary. Thanks to his scientific mind he understood–a proof of disinterested intelligence which had pleased her and comforted her enormously. One could talk of painting then seriously to a man. Indeed, his friendship had been one of the pleasures of her life. She loved William Bankes.

They went to Hampton Court[152] and he always left her, like the perfect gentleman he was, plenty of time to wash her hands,[153] while he strolled by the river. That was typical of their relationship. Many things were left unsaid. Then they strolled through the courtyards, and admired, summer after summer, the proportions and the flowers, and he would tell her things, about perspective, about architecture, as they walked, and he would stop to look at a tree, or the view over the lake, and admire a child–(it was his great grief–he had no daughter) in the vague aloof way that was natural to a man who spent spent so much time in laboratories that the world when he came out seemed to dazzle him, so that he walked slowly, lifted his hand to screen his eyes and paused, with his head thrown back, merely to breathe the air. Then he would tell her how his housekeeper was on her holiday; he must buy a new carpet for the staircase. Perhaps she would go with him to buy a new carpet for the staircase. And once something led him to talk about the Ramsays and he had said how when he first saw her she had been wearing a grey hat; she was not more than nineteen or twenty. She was astonishingly beautiful. There he stood looking down the avenue at Hampton Court as if he could see her there among the fountains.

She looked now at the drawing-room step. She saw, through William's eyes, the shape of a woman, peaceful and silent, with downcast eyes. She sat musing, pondering (she was in grey that day, Lily thought). Her eyes were bent. She would never lift them. Yes, thought Lily, looking intently, I must have seen her look like that, but not in grey; nor so still, nor so young, nor so peaceful. The figure came readily enough. She was astonishingly beautiful, as William said. But beauty was not everything. Beauty had this penalty–it came too readily, came

151. Raphael (1483-1520), the Italian Renaissance painter, produced several images of the Mary with the infant Jesus.

152. A palace on the outskirts of London, built by Cardinal Wolsey in 1514 and appropriated by Henry VIII. A popular tourist site.

153. A euphemism for using the bathroom.

too completely. It stilled life–froze it. One forgot the little agitations; the flush, the pallor, some queer distortion, some light or shadow, which made the face unrecognisable for a moment and yet added a quality one saw for ever after. It was simpler to smooth that all out under the cover of beauty. But what was the look she had, Lily wondered, when she clapped her deer-stalker's hat on her head, or ran across the grass, or scolded Kennedy, the gardener? Who could tell her? Who could help her?

Against her will she had come to the surface, and found herself half out of the picture, looking, little dazedly, as if at unreal things, at Mr. Carmichael. He lay on his chair with his hands clasped above his paunch not reading, or sleeping, but basking like a creature gorged with existence. His book had fallen on to the grass.

She wanted to go straight up to him and say, "Mr. Carmichael!" Then he would look up benevolently as always, from his smoky vague green eyes. But one only woke people if one knew what one wanted to say to them. And she wanted to say not one thing, but everything. Little words that broke up the thought and dismembered it said nothing. "About life, about death; about Mrs. Ramsay"–no, she thought, one could say nothing to nobody. The urgency of the moment always missed its mark. Words fluttered sideways and struck the object inches too low. Then one gave it up; then the idea sunk back again; then one became like most middle-aged people, cautious, furtive, with wrinkles between the eyes and a look of perpetual apprehension. For how could one express in words these emotions of the body? express that emptiness there? (She was looking at the drawing-room steps; they looked extraordinarily empty.) It was one's body feeling, not one's mind. The physical sensations that went with the bare look of the steps had become suddenly extremely unpleasant. To want and not to have, sent all up her body a hardness, a hollowness, a strain. And then to want and not to have–to want and want–how that wrung the heart, and wrung it again and again! Oh, Mrs. Ramsay! she called out silently, to that essence which sat by the boat, that abstract one made of her, that woman in grey, as if to abuse her for having gone, and then having gone, come back again. It had seemed so safe, thinking of her. Ghost, air, nothingness, a thing you could play with easily and safely at any time of day or night, she had been that, and then suddenly she put her hand out and wrung the heart thus. Suddenly, the empty drawing-room steps, the frill of the chair inside, the puppy tumbling on the terrace, the whole wave and whisper of the garden became like curves and arabesques flourishing round a centre of complete emptiness.

"What does it mean? How do you explain it all?" she wanted to say, turning to Mr. Carmichael again. For the whole world seemed to have dissolved in this early morning hour into a pool of thought, a deep

basin of reality, and one could almost fancy that had Mr. Carmichael spoken, for instance, a little tear would have rent the surface pool. And then? Something would emerge. A hand would be shoved up, a blade would be flashed. It was nonsense of course.

A curious notion came to her that he did after all hear the things she could not say. He was an inscrutable old man, with the yellow stain on his beard, and his poetry, and his puzzles, sailing serenely through a world which satisfied all his wants, so that she thought he had only to put down his hand where he lay on the lawn to fish up anything he wanted. She looked at her picture. That would have been his answer, presumably–how “you” and “I” and “she” pass and vanish; nothing stays; all changes; but not words, not paint. Yet it would be hung in the attics, she thought; it would be rolled up and flung under a sofa; yet even so, even of a picture like that, it was true. One might say, even of this scrawl, not of that actual picture, perhaps, but of what it attempted, that it “remained for ever,” she was going to say, or, for the words spoken sounded even to herself, too boastful, to hint, wordlessly; when, looking at the picture, she was surprised to find that she could not see it. Her eyes were full of a hot liquid (she did not think of tears at first) which, without disturbing the firmness of her lips, made the air thick, rolled down her cheeks. She had perfect control of herself–Oh, yes!–in every other way. Was she crying then for Mrs. Ramsay, without being aware of any unhappiness? She addressed old Mr. Carmichael again. What was it then? What did it mean? Could things thrust their hands up and grip one; could the blade cut; the fist grasp? Was there no safety? No learning by heart of the ways of the world? No guide, no shelter, but all was miracle, and leaping from the pinnacle of a tower into the air? Could it be, even for elderly people, that this was life?–startling, unexpected, unknown? For one moment she felt that if they both got up, here, now on the lawn, and demanded an explanation, why was it so short, why was it so inexplicable, said it with violence, as two fully equipped human beings from whom nothing should be hid might speak, then, beauty would roll itself up; the space would fill; those empty flourishes would form into shape; if they shouted loud enough Mrs. Ramsay would return. “Mrs. Ramsay!” she said aloud, “Mrs. Ramsay!” The tears ran down her face.

7

[Macalister’s boy took one of the fish and cut a square out of its side to bait his hook with. The mutilated body (it was alive still) was thrown back into the sea.]

8

"Mrs. Ramsay!" Lily cried, "Mrs. Ramsay!" But nothing happened. The pain increased. That anguish could reduce one to such a pitch of imbecility, she thought! Anyhow the old man had not heard her. He remained benignant, calm–if one chose to think it, sublime. Heaven be praised, no one had heard her cry that ignominious cry, stop pain, stop! She had not obviously taken leave of her senses. No one had seen her step off her strip of board into the waters of annihilation. She remained a skimpy old maid, holding a paint-brush.

And now slowly the pain of the want, and the bitter anger (to be called back, just as she thought she would never feel sorrow for Mrs. Ramsay again. Had she missed her among the coffee cups at breakfast? not in the least) lessened; and of their anguish left, as antidote, a relief that was balm in itself, and also, but more mysteriously, a sense of some one there, of Mrs. Ramsay, relieved for a moment of the weight that the world had put on her, staying lightly by her side and then (for this was Mrs. Ramsay in all her beauty) raising to her forehead a wreath of white flowers with which she went. Lily squeezed her tubes again. She attacked that problem of the hedge. It was strange how clearly she saw her, stepping with her usual quickness across fields among whose folds, purplish and soft, among whose flowers, hyacinth or lilies, she vanished. It was some trick of the painter's eye. For days after she had heard of her death she had seen her thus, putting her wreath to her forehead and going unquestioningly with her companion, a shade across the fields. The sight, the phrase, had its power to console. Wherever she happened to be, painting, here, in the country or in London, the vision would come to her, and her eyes, half closing, sought something to base her vision on. She looked down the railway carriage, the omnibus; took a line from shoulder or cheek; looked at the windows opposite; at Piccadilly, lamp-strung in the evening. All had been part of the fields of death. But always something–it might be a face, a voice, a paper boy crying *Standard, News*[154]–thrust through, snubbed her, waked her, required and got in the end an effort of attention, so that the vision must be perpetually remade. Now again, moved as she was by some instinctive need of distance and blue, she looked at the bay beneath her, making hillocks of the blue bars of the waves, and stony fields of the purpler spaces, again she was roused as usual by something incongruous. There was a brown spot in the middle of the bay. It was a boat. Yes, she realised that after a second. But whose boat? Mr. Ramsay's boat, she replied. Mr. Ramsay; the man who had marched past her, with his hand raised, aloof, at the head of a procession, in his beautiful boots, asking her for sympathy, which

154. A boy selling London's Evening Standard newspaper.

she had refused. The boat was now half way across the bay.

So fine was the morning except for a streak of wind here and there that the sea and sky looked all one fabric, as if sails were stuck high up in the sky, or the clouds had dropped down into the sea. A steamer far out at sea had drawn in the air a great scroll of smoke which stayed there curving and circling decoratively, as if the air were a fine gauze which held things and kept them softly in its mesh, only gently swaying them this way and that. And as happens sometimes when the weather is very fine, the cliffs looked as if they were conscious of the ships, and the ships looked as if they were conscious of the cliffs, as if they signalled to each other some message of their own. For sometimes quite close to the shore, the Lighthouse looked this morning in the haze an enormous distance away.

“Where are they now?” Lily thought, looking out to sea. Where was he, that very old man who had gone past her silently, holding a brown paper parcel under his arm? The boat was in the middle of the bay.

9

They don’t feel a thing there, Cam thought, looking at the shore, which, rising and falling, became steadily more distant and more peaceful. Her hand cut a trail in the sea, as her mind made the green swirls and streaks into patterns and, numbed and shrouded, wandered in imagination in that underworld of waters where the pearls stuck in clusters to white sprays, where in the green light a change came over one’s entire mind and one’s body shone half transparent enveloped in a green cloak.

Then the eddy slackened round her hand. The rush of the water ceased; the world became full of little creaking and squeaking sounds. One heard the waves breaking and flapping against the side of the boat as if they were anchored in harbour. Everything became very close to one. For the sail, upon which James had his eyes fixed until it had become to him like a person whom he knew, sagged entirely; there they came to a stop, flapping about waiting for a breeze, in the hot sun, miles from shore, miles from the Lighthouse. Everything in the whole world seemed to stand still. The Lighthouse became immovable, and the line of the distant shore became fixed. The sun grew hotter and everybody seemed to come very close together and to feel each other’s presence, which they had almost forgotten. Macalister’s fishing line went plumb down into the sea. But Mr. Ramsay went on reading with his legs curled under him.

He was reading a little shiny book with covers mottled like a plover's egg. Now and again, as they hung about in that horrid calm, he turned a page. And James felt that each page was turned with a peculiar gesture aimed at him; now assertively, now commandingly; now with the intention of making people pity him; and all the time, as his father read and turned one after another of those little pages, James kept dreading the moment when he would look up and speak sharply to him about something or other. Why were they lagging about here? he would demand, or something quite unreasonable like that. And if he does, James thought, then I shall take a knife and strike him to the heart.

He had always kept this old symbol of taking a knife and striking his father to the heart. Only now, as he grew older, and sat staring at his father in an impotent rage, it was not him, that old man reading, whom he wanted to kill, but it was the thing that descended on him–without his knowing it perhaps: that fierce sudden black-winged harpy, with its talons and its beak all cold and hard, that struck and struck at you (he could feel the beak on his bare legs, where it had struck when he was a child) and then made off, and there he was again, an old man, very sad, reading his book. That he would kill, that he would strike to the heart. Whatever he did–(and he might do anything, he felt, looking at the Lighthouse and the distant shore) whether he was in a business, in a bank, a barrister, a man at the head of some enterprise, that he would fight, that he would track down and stamp out–tyranny, despotism, he called it–making people do what they did not want to do, cutting off their right to speak. How could any of them say, But I won't, when he said, Come to the Lighthouse. Do this. Fetch me that. The black wings spread, and the hard beak tore. And then next moment, there he sat reading his book; and he might look up–one never knew–quite reasonably. He might talk to the Macalisters. He might be pressing a sovereign into some frozen old woman's hand in the street, James thought, and he might be shouting out at some fisherman's sports; he might be waving his arms in the air with excitement. Or he might sit at the head of the table dead silent from one end of dinner to the other. Yes, thought James, while the boat slapped and dawdled there in the hot sun; there was a waste of snow and rock very lonely and austere; and there he had come to feel, quite often lately, when his father said something or did something which surprised the others, there were two pairs of footprints only; his own and his father's. They alone knew each other. What then was this terror, this hatred?[155] Turning back among the many leaves which the past had folded in him, peering into the heart of that forest where light and shade so chequer each other that all shape is distorted, and one blunders, now with the sun in one's eyes,

155. See note 2 on Woolf's brother Adrian Stephen and his relationship with his father. Adrian became a Freudian psychoanalyst, and many critics have noted the Oedipal conflict between James and Mr. Ramsay here.

now with a dark shadow, he sought an image to cool and detach and round off his feeling in a concrete shape. Suppose then that as a child sitting helpless in a perambulator, or on some one's knee, he had seen a waggon crush ignorantly and innocently, some one's foot? Suppose he had seen the foot first, in the grass, smooth, and whole; then the wheel; and the same foot, purple, crushed. But the wheel was innocent. So now, when his father came striding down the passage knocking them up early in the morning to go to the Lighthouse down it came over his foot, over Cam's foot, over anybody's foot. One sat and watched it.

But whose foot was he thinking of, and in what garden did all this happen? For one had settings for these scenes; trees that grew there; flowers; a certain light; a few figures. Everything tended to set itself in a garden where there was none of this gloom. None of this throwing of hands about; people spoke in an ordinary tone of voice. They went in and out all day long. There was an old woman gossiping in the kitchen; and the blinds were sucked in and out by the breeze; all was blowing, all was growing; and over all those plates and bowls and tall brandishing red and yellow flowers a very thin yellow veil would be drawn, like a vine leaf, at night. Things became stiller and darker at night. But the leaf-like veil was so fine, that lights lifted it, voices crinkled it; he could see through it a figure stooping, hear, coming close, going away, some dress rustling, some chain tinkling.

It was in this world that the wheel went over the person's foot. Something, he remembered, stayed flourished up in the air, something arid and sharp descended even there, like a blade, a scimitar, smiting through the leaves and flowers even of that happy world and making it shrivel and fall.

"It will rain," he remembered his father saying. "You won't be able to go to the Lighthouse."

The Lighthouse was then a silvery, misty-looking tower with a yellow eye, that opened suddenly, and softly in the evening. Now–

James looked at the Lighthouse. He could see the white-washed rocks; the tower, stark and straight; he could see that it was barred with black and white; he could see windows in it; he could even see washing spread on the rocks to dry. So that was the Lighthouse, was it?

No, the other was also the Lighthouse. For nothing was simply one thing. The other Lighthouse was true too. It was sometimes hardly to be seen across the bay. In the evening one looked up and saw the eye opening and shutting and the light seemed to reach them in that airy sunny garden where they sat.

But he pulled himself up. Whenever he said "they" or "a person," and then began hearing the rustle of some one coming, the tinkle of some one going, he became extremely sensitive to the presence of whoever might be in the room. It was his father now. The strain was acute. For in one moment if there was no breeze, his father would slap the covers of his book together, and say: "What's happening now? What are we dawdling about here for, eh?" as, once before he had brought his blade down among them on the terrace and she had gone stiff all over, and if there had been an axe handy, a knife, or anything with a sharp point he would have seized it and struck his father through the heart. She had gone stiff all over, and then, her arm slackening, so that he felt she listened to him no longer, she had risen somehow and gone away and left him there, impotent, ridiculous, sitting on the floor grasping a pair of scissors.

Not a breath of wind blew. The water chuckled and gurgled in the bottom of the boat where three or four mackerel beat their tails up and down in a pool of water not deep enough to cover them. At any moment Mr. Ramsay (he scarcely dared look at him) might rouse himself, shut his book, and say something sharp; but for the moment he was reading, so that James stealthily, as if he were stealing downstairs on bare feet, afraid of waking a watchdog by a creaking board, went on thinking what was she like, where did she go that day? He began following her from room to room and at last they came to a room where in a blue light, as if the reflection came from many china dishes, she talked to somebody; he listened to her talking. She talked to a servant, saying simply whatever came into her head. She alone spoke the truth; to her alone could he speak it. That was the source of her everlasting attraction for him, perhaps; she was a person to whom one could say what came into one's head. But all the time he thought of her, he was conscious of his father following his thought, surveying it, making it shiver and falter. At last he ceased to think.

There he sat with his hand on the tiller in the sun, staring at the Lighthouse, powerless to move, powerless to flick off these grains of misery which settled on his mind one after another. A rope seemed to bind him there, and his father had knotted it and he could only escape by taking a knife and plunging it… But at that moment the sail swung slowly round, filled slowly out, the boat seemed to shake herself, and then to move off half conscious in her sleep, and then she woke and shot through the waves. The relief was extraordinary. They all seemed to fall away from each other again and to be at their ease, and the fishing-lines slanted taut across the side of the boat. But his father did not rouse himself. He only raised his right hand mysteriously high in the air, and let it fall upon his knee again as if he were conducting some secret symphony.

10

[The sea without a stain on it, thought Lily Briscoe, still standing and looking out over the bay. The sea stretched like silk across the bay. Distance had an extraordinary power; they had been swallowed up in it, she felt, they were gone for ever, they had become part of the nature of things. It was so calm; it was so quiet. The steamer itself had vanished, but the great scroll of smoke still hung in the air and drooped like a flag mournfully in valediction.]

11

It was like that then, the island, thought Cam, once more drawing her fingers through the waves. She had never seen it from out at sea before. It lay like that on the sea, did it, with a dent in the middle and two sharp crags, and the sea swept in there, and spread away for miles and miles on either side of the island. It was very small; shaped something like a leaf stood on end. So we took a little boat, she thought, beginning to tell herself a story of adventure about escaping from a sinking ship. But with the sea streaming through her fingers, a spray of seaweed vanishing behind them, she did not want to tell herself seriously a story; it was the sense of adventure and escape that she wanted, for she was thinking, as the boat sailed on, how her father's anger about the points of the compass, James's obstinacy about the compact, and her own anguish, all had slipped, all had passed, all had streamed away. What then came next? Where were they going? From her hand, ice cold, held deep in the sea, there spurted up a fountain of joy at the change, at the escape, at the adventure (that she should be alive, that she should be there). And the drops falling from this sudden and unthinking fountain of joy fell here and there on the dark, the slumbrous shapes in her mind; shapes of a world not realised but turning in their darkness, catching here and there, a spark of light; Greece, Rome, Constantinople.[156] Small as it was, and shaped something like a leaf stood on its end with the gold-sprinkled waters flowing in and about it, it had, she supposed, a place in the universe–even that little island? The old gentlemen in the study she thought could have told her. Sometimes she strayed in from the garden purposely to catch them at it. There they were (it might be Mr. Carmichael or Mr. Bankes who was sitting with her father) sitting opposite each other in their low arm-chairs. They were crackling in front of them the pages of *The Times*, when she came in from the garden,

156. Istanbul; see note 85.

all in a muddle, about something some one had said about Christ, or hearing that a mammoth had been dug up in a London street, or wondering what Napoleon[157] was like. Then they took all this with their clean hands (they wore grey-coloured clothes; they smelt of heather) and they brushed the scraps together, turning the paper, crossing their knees, and said something now and then very brief. Just to please herself she would take a book from the shelf and stand there, watching her father write, so equally, so neatly from one side of the page to another, with a little cough now and then, or something said briefly to the other old gentleman opposite. And she thought, standing there with her book open, one could let whatever one thought expand here like a leaf in water; and if it did well here, among the old gentlemen smoking and *The Times* crackling then it was right. And watching her father as he wrote in his study, she thought (now sitting in the boat) he was not vain, nor a tyrant and did not wish to make you pity him. Indeed, if he saw she was there, reading a book, he would ask her, as gently as any one could, Was there nothing he could give her?

Lest this should be wrong, she looked at him reading the little book with the shiny cover mottled like a plover’s egg. No; it was right. Look at him now, she wanted to say aloud to James. (But James had his eye on the sail.) He is a sarcastic brute, James would say. He brings the talk round to himself and his books, James would say. He is intolerably egotistical. Worst of all, he is a tyrant. But look! she said, looking at him. Look at him now. She looked at him reading the little book with his legs curled; the little book whose yellowish pages she knew, without knowing what was written on them. It was small; it was closely printed; on the fly-leaf, she knew, he had written that he had spent fifteen francs on dinner; the wine had been so much; he had given so much to the waiter; all was added up neatly at the bottom of the page. But what might be written in the book which had rounded its edges off in his pocket, she did not know. What he thought they none of them knew. But he was absorbed in it, so that when he looked up, as he did now for an instant, it was not to see anything; it was to pin down some thought more exactly. That done, his mind flew back again and he plunged into his reading. He read, she thought, as if he were guiding something, or wheedling a large flock of sheep, or pushing his way up and up a single narrow path; and sometimes he went fast and straight, and broke his way through the bramble, and sometimes it seemed a branch struck at him, a bramble blinded him, but he was not going to let himself be beaten by that; on he went, tossing over page after page. And she went on telling herself a story about escaping from a sinking ship, for she was safe, while he sat there; safe, as she felt herself when she crept in from the garden, and took a book down, and the old gentleman, lowering the paper suddenly, said

157. Napoleon Bonaparte; see note 110.

something very brief over the top of it about the character of Napoleon.

She gazed back over the sea, at the island. But the leaf was losing its sharpness. It was very small; it was very distant. The sea was more important now than the shore. Waves were all round them, tossing and sinking, with a log wallowing down one wave; a gull riding on another. About here, she thought, dabbling her fingers in the water, a ship had sunk, and she murmured, dreamily half asleep, how we perished, each alone.[158]

12

So much depends then, thought Lily Briscoe, looking at the sea which had scarcely a stain on it, which was so soft that the sails and the clouds seemed set in its blue, so much depends, she thought, upon distance: whether people are near us or far from us; for her feeling for Mr. Ramsay changed as he sailed further and further across the bay. It seemed to be elongated, stretched out; he seemed to become more and more remote. He and his children seemed to be swallowed up in that blue, that distance; but here, on the lawn, close at hand, Mr. Carmichael suddenly grunted. She laughed. He clawed his book up from the grass. He settled into his chair again puffing and blowing like some sea monster. That was different altogether, because he was so near. And now again all was quiet. They must be out of bed by this time, she supposed, looking at the house, but nothing appeared there. But then, she remembered, they had always made off directly a meal was over, on business of their own. It was all in keeping with this silence, this emptiness, and the unreality of the early morning hour. It was a way things had sometimes, she thought, lingering for a moment and looking at the long glittering windows and the plume of blue smoke: they became illness, before habits had spun themselves across the surface, one felt that same unreality, which was so startling; felt something emerge. Life was most vivid then. One could be at one's ease. Mercifully one need not say, very briskly, crossing the lawn to greet old Mrs. Beckwith, who would be coming out to find a corner to sit in, "Oh, good-morning, Mrs. Beckwith! What a lovely day! Are you going to be so bold as to sit in the sun? Jasper's hidden the chairs. Do let me find you one!" and all the rest of the usual chatter. One need not speak at all. One glided, one shook one's sails (there was a good deal of movement in the bay, boats were starting off) between things, beyond things. Empty it was not, but full to the brim. She seemed to be standing up to the lips in some substance, to move and float and sink in it, yes, for these waters were unfathomably deep. Into them

158. Cowper, as Mr. Ramsay has previously quoted; see note 113.

had spilled so many lives. The Ramsays'; the children's; and all sorts of waifs and strays of things besides. A washer-woman with her basket; a rook, a red-hot poker[159]; the purples and grey-greens of flowers: some common feeling which held the whole together.

It was some such feeling of completeness perhaps which, ten years ago, standing almost where she stood now, had made her say that she must be in love with the place. Love had a thousand shapes. There might be lovers whose gift it was to choose out the elements of things and place them together and so, giving them a wholeness not theirs in life, make of some scene, or meeting of people (all now gone and separate), one of those globed compacted things over which thought lingers, and love plays.

Her eyes rested on the brown speck of Mr. Ramsay's sailing boat. They would be at the Lighthouse by lunch time she supposed. But the wind had freshened, and, as the sky changed slightly and the sea changed slightly and the boats altered their positions, the view, which a moment before had seemed miraculously fixed, was now unsatisfactory. The wind had blown the trail of smoke about; there was something displeasing about the placing of the ships.

The disproportion there seemed to upset some harmony in her own mind. She felt an obscure distress. It was confirmed when she turned to her picture. She had been wasting her morning. For whatever reason she could not achieve that razor edge of balance between two opposite forces; Mr. Ramsay and the picture; which was necessary. There was something perhaps wrong with the design? Was it, she wondered, that the line of the wall wanted breaking, was it that the mass of the trees was too heavy? She smiled ironically; for had she not thought, when she began, that she had solved her problem?

What was the problem then? She must try to get hold of something tht evaded her. It evaded her when she thought of Mrs. Ramsay; it evaded her now when she thought of her picture. Phrases came. Visions came. Beautiful pictures. Beautiful phrases. But what she wished to get hold of was that very jar on the nerves, the thing itself before it has been made anything. Get that and start afresh; get that and start afresh; she said desperately, pitching herself firmly again before her easel. It was a miserable machine, an inefficient machine, she thought, the human apparatus for painting or for feeling; it always broke down at the critical moment; heroically, one must force it on. She stared, frowning. There was the hedge, sure enough. But one got nothing by soliciting urgently. One got only a glare in the eye from looking at the line of the wall, or from thinking–she wore a grey hat. She was

159. A flower; see note 28.

astonishingly beautiful. Let it come, she thought, if it will come. For there are moments when one can neither think nor feel. And if one can neither think nor feel, she thought, where is one?

Here on the grass, on the ground, she thought, sitting down, and examining with her brush a little colony of plantains.[160] For the lawn was very rough. Here sitting on the world, she thought, for she could not shake herself free from the sense that everything this morning was happening for the first time, perhaps for the last time, as a traveller, even though he is half asleep, knows, looking out of the train window, that he must look now, for he will never see that town, or that mule-cart, or that woman at work in the fields, again. The lawn was the world; they were up here together, on this exalted station, she thought, looking at old Mr. Carmichael, who seemed (though they had not said a word all this time) to share her thoughts. And she would never see him again perhaps. He was growing old. Also, she remembered, smiling at the slipper that dangled from his foot, he was growing famous. People said that his poetry was "so beautiful." They went and published things he had written forty years ago. There was a famous man now called Carmichael, she smiled, thinking how many shapes one person might wear, how he was that in the newspapers, but here the same as he had always been. He looked the same–greyer, rather. Yes, he looked the same, but somebody had said, she recalled, that when he had heard of Andrew Ramsay's death (he was killed in a second by a shell; he should have been a great mathematician) Mr. Carmichael had "lost all interest in life." What did it mean–that? she wondered. Had he marched through Trafalgar Square grasping a big stick? Had he turned pages over and over, without reading them, sitting in his room in St. John's Wood alone? She did not know what he had done, when he heard that Andrew was killed, but she felt it in him all the same. They only mumbled at each other on staircases; they looked up at the sky and said it will be fine or it won't be fine. But this was one way of knowing people, she thought: to know the outline, not the detail, to sit in one's garden and look at the slopes of a hill running purple down into the distant heather. She knew him in that way. She knew that he had changed somehow. She had never read a line of his poetry. She thought that she knew how it went though, slowly and sonorously. It was seasoned and mellow. It was about the desert and the camel. It was about the palm tree and the sunset. It was extremely impersonal; it said something about death; it said very little about love. There was an impersonality about him. He wanted very little of other people. Had he not always lurched rather awkwardly past the drawing-room window with some newspaper under his arm, trying to avoid Mrs. Ramsay whom for some reason he did not much like? On that account, of course, she would always try to make him stop. He would bow to her. He would halt

160. A weedy herb with healing properties.

unwillingly and bow profoundly. Annoyed that he did not want anything of her, Mrs. Ramsay would ask him (Lily could hear her) wouldn't he like a coat, a rug, a newspaper? No, he wanted nothing. (Here he bowed.) There was some quality in her which he did not much like. It was perhaps her masterfulness, her positiveness, something matter-of-fact in her. She was so direct.

(A noise drew her attention to the drawing-room window–the squeak of a hinge. The light breeze was toying with the window.)

There must have been people who disliked her very much, Lily thought (Yes; she realised that the drawing-room step was empty, but it had no effect on her whatever. She did not want Mrs. Ramsay now.)–People who thought her too sure, too drastic.

Also, her beauty offended people probably. How monotonous, they would say, and the same always! They preferred another type–the dark, the vivacious. Then she was weak with her husband. She let him make those scenes. Then she was reserved. Nobody knew exactly what had happened to her. And (to go back to Mr. Carmichael and his dislike) one could not imagine Mrs. Ramsay standing painting, lying reading, a whole morning on the lawn. It was unthinkable. Without saying a word, the only token of her errand a basket on her arm, she went off to the town, to the poor, to sit in some stuffy little bedroom. Often and often Lily had seen her go silently in the midst of some game, some discussion, with her basket on her arm, very upright. She had noted her return. She had thought, half laughing (she was so methodical with the tea cups), half moved (her beauty took one's breath away), eyes that are closing in pain have looked on you. You have been with them there.

And then Mrs. Ramsay would be annoyed because somebody was late, or the butter not fresh, or the teapot chipped. And all the time she was saying that the butter was not fresh one would be thinking of Greek temples, and how beauty had been with them there in that stuffy little room. She never talked of it–she went, punctually, directly. It was her instinct to go, an instinct like the swallows for the south, the artichokes for the sun, turning her infallibly to the human race, making her nest in its heart. And this, like all instincts, was a little distressing to people who did not share it; to Mr. Carmichael perhaps, to herself certainly. Some notion was in both of them about the ineffectiveness of action, the supremacy of thought. Her going was a reproach to them, gave a different twist to the world, so that they were led to protest, seeing their own prepossessions disappear, and clutch at them vanishing. Charles Tansley did that too: it was part of the reason why one disliked him. He upset the proportions of one's world. And what had happened to him, she wondered, idly stirring the

plantains[161] with her brush. He had got his fellowship. He had married; he lived at Golder's Green.[162]

She had gone one day into a Hall and heard him speaking during the war. He was denouncing something: he was condemning somebody. He was preaching brotherly love. And all she felt was how could he love his kind who did not know one picture from another, who had stood behind her smoking shag[163] ("fivepence an ounce, Miss Briscoe") and making it his business to tell her women can't write, women can't paint, not so much that he believed it, as that for some odd reason he wished it? There he was lean and red and raucous, preaching love from a platform (there were ants crawling about among the plantains which she disturbed with her brush–red, energetic, shiny ants, rather like Charles Tansley). She had looked at him ironically from her seat in the half-empty hall, pumping love into that chilly space, and suddenly, there was the old cask or whatever it was bobbing up and down among the waves and Mrs. Ramsay looking for her spectacle case among the pebbles. "Oh, dear! What a nuisance! Lost again. Don't bother, Mr. Tansley. I lose thousands every summer," at which he pressed his chin back against his collar, as if afraid to sanction such exaggeration, but could stand it in her whom he liked, and smiled very charmingly. He must have confided in her on one of those long expeditions when people got separated and walked back alone. He was educating his little sister, Mrs. Ramsay had told her. It was immensely to his credit. Her own idea of him was grotesque, Lily knew well, stirring the plantains[164] with her brush. Half one's notions of other people were, after all, grotesque. They served private purposes of one's own. He did for her instead of a whipping-boy. She found herself flagellating his lean flanks when she was out of temper. If she wanted to be serious about him she had to help herself to Mrs. Ramsay's sayings, to look at him through her eyes.

She raised a little mountain for the ants to climb over. She reduced them to a frenzy of indecision by this interference in their cosmogony. Some ran this way, others that.

One wanted fifty pairs of eyes to see with, she reflected. Fifty pairs of eyes were not enough to get round that one woman with, she thought. Among them, must be one that was stone blind to her beauty. One wanted most some secret sense, fine as air, with which to steal through keyholes and surround her where she sat knitting, talking, sitting silent in the window alone; which took to itself and treasured up like the air which held the smoke of the steamer, her thoughts, her imaginations, her desires. What did the hedge mean to her, what did

161. Weeds; see note 160.

162. Golders Green is a then relatively new, and predominantly Jewish, suburb of London.

163. Cheap tobacco; see note 13.

164. Weeds; see note 160.

the garden mean to her, what did it mean to her when a wave broke? (Lily looked up, as she had seen Mrs. Ramsay look up; she too heard a wave falling on the beach.) And then what stirred and trembled in her mind when the children cried, “How’s that? How’s that?” cricketing? She would stop knitting for a second. She would look intent. Then she would lapse again, and suddenly Mr. Ramsay stopped dead in his pacing in front of her and some curious shock passed through her and seemed to rock her in profound agitation on its breast when stopping there he stood over her and looked down at her. Lily could see him.

He stretched out his hand and raised her from her chair. It seemed somehow as if he had done it before; as if he had once bent in the same way and raised her from a boat which, lying a few inches off some island, had required that the ladies should thus be helped on shore by the gentlemen. An old-fashioned scene that was, which required, very nearly, crinolines and peg-top trousers. Letting herself be helped by him, Mrs. Ramsay had thought (Lily supposed) the time has come now. Yes, she would say it now. Yes, she would marry him. And she stepped slowly, quietly on shore. Probably she said one word only, letting her hand rest still in his. I will marry you, she might have said, with her hand in his; but no more. Time after time the same thrill had passed between them–obviously it had, Lily thought, smoothing a way for her ants. She was not inventing; she was only trying to smooth out something she had been given years ago folded up; something she had seen. For in the rough and tumble of daily life, with all those children about, all those visitors, one had constantly a sense of repetition–of one thing falling where another had fallen, and so setting up an echo which chimed in the air and made it full of vibrations.

But it would be a mistake, she thought, thinking how they walked off together, arm in arm, past the greenhouse, to simplify their relationship. It was no monotony of bliss–she with her impulses and quicknesses; he with his shudders and glooms. Oh, no. The bedroom door would slam violently early in the morning. He would start from the table in a temper. He would whizz his plate through the window. Then all through the house there would be a sense of doors slamming and blinds fluttering, as if a gusty wind were blowing and people scudded about trying in a hasty way to fasten hatches and make things ship-shape. She had met Paul Rayley like that one day on the stairs. They had laughed and laughed, like a couple of children, all because Mr. Ramsay, finding an earwig in his milk at breakfast had sent the whole thing flying through the air on to the terrace outside. ‘An earwig, Prue murmured, awestruck, ‘in his milk.’ Other people might find centipedes. But he had built round him such a fence of sanctity, and occupied the space with such a demeanour of majesty that an earwig in his milk was a monster.

But it tired Mrs. Ramsay, it cowed her a little–the plates whizzing and the doors slamming. And there would fall between them sometimes long rigid silences, when, in a state of mind which annoyed Lily in her, half plaintive, half resentful, she seemed unable to surmount the tempest calmly, or to laugh as they laughed, but in her weariness perhaps concealed something. She brooded and sat silent. After a time he would hang stealthily about the places where she was–roaming under the window where she sat writing letters or talking, for she would take care to be busy when he passed, and evade him, and pretend not to see him. Then he would turn smooth as silk, affable, urbane, and try to win her so. Still she would hold off, and now she would assert for a brief season some of those prides and airs the due of her beauty which she was generally utterly without; would turn her head; would look so, over her shoulder, always with some Minta, Paul, or William Bankes at her side. At length, standing outside the group the very figure of a famished wolfhound (Lily got up off the grass and stood looking at the steps, at the window, where she had seen him), he would say her name, once only, for all the world like a wolf barking in the snow, but still she held back; and he would say it once more, and this time something in the tone would rouse her, and she would go to him, leaving them all of a sudden, and they would walk off together among the pear trees, the cabbages, and the raspberry beds. They would have it out together. But with what attitudes and with what words? Such a dignity was theirs in this relationship that, turning away, she and Paul and Minta would hide their curiosity and their discomfort, and begin picking flowers, throwing balls, chattering, until it was time for dinner, and there they were, he at one end of the table, she at the other, as usual.

“Why don’t some of you take up botany?.. With all those legs and arms why doesn’t one of you…?” So they would talk as usual, laughing, among the children. All would be as usual, save only for some quiver, as of a blade in the air, which came and went between them as if the usual sight of the children sitting round their soup plates had freshened itself in their eyes after that hour among the pears and the cabbages. Especially, Lily thought, Mrs. Ramsay would glance at Prue. She sat in the middle between brothers and sisters, always occupied, it seemed, seeing that nothing went wrong so that she scarcely spoke herself. How Prue must have blamed herself for that earwig in the milk How white she had gone when Mr. Ramsay threw his plate through the window! How she drooped under those long silences between them! Anyhow, her mother now would seem to be making it up to her; assuring her that everything was well; promising her that one of these days that same happiness would be hers. She had enjoyed it for less than a year, however.

She had let the flowers fall from her basket, Lily thought, screwing up her eyes and standing back as if to look at her picture, which she was not touching, however, with all her faculties in a trance, frozen over superficially but moving underneath with extreme speed.

She let her flowers fall from her basket, scattered and tumbled them on to the grass and, reluctantly and hesitatingly, but without question or complaint–had she not the faculty of obedience to perfection?–went too. Down fields, across valleys, white, flower-strewn–that was how she would have painted it. The hills were austere. It was rocky; it was steep. The waves sounded hoarse on the stones beneath. They went, the three of them together, Mrs. Ramsay walking rather fast in front, as if she expected to meet some one round the corner.

Suddenly the window at which she was looking was whitened by some light stuff behind it. At last then somebody had come into the drawing-room; somebody was sitting in the chair. For Heaven's sake, she prayed, let them sit still there and not come floundering out to talk to her. Mercifully, whoever it was stayed still inside; had settled by some stroke of luck so as to throw an odd-shaped triangular shadow over the step. It altered the composition of the picture a little. It was interesting. It might be useful. Her mood was coming back to her. One must keep on looking without for a second relaxing the intensity of emotion, the determination not to be put off, not to be bamboozled. One must hold the scene–so–in a vise and let nothing come in and spoil it. One wanted, she thought, dipping her brush deliberately, to be on a level with ordinary experience, to feel simply that's a chair, that's a table, and yet at the same time, It's a miracle, it's an ecstasy. The problem might be solved after all. Ah, but what had happened? Some wave of white went over the window pane. The air must have stirred some flounce in the room. Her heart leapt at her and seized her and tortured her.

"Mrs. Ramsay! Mrs. Ramsay!" she cried, feeling the old horror come back–to want and want and not to have. Could she inflict that still? And then, quietly, as if she refrained, that too became part of ordinary experience, was on a level with the chair, with the table. Mrs. Ramsay–it was part of her perfect goodness–sat there quite simply, in the chair, flicked her needles to and fro, knitted her reddish-brown stocking, cast her shadow on the step. There she sat.

And as if she had something she must share, yet could hardly leave her easel, so full her mind was of what she was thinking, of what she was seeing, Lily went past Mr. Carmichael holding her brush to the edge of the lawn. Where was that boat now? And Mr. Ramsay? She wanted him.

13

Mr. Ramsay had almost done reading. One hand hovered over the page as if to be in readiness to turn it the very instant he had finished it. He sat there bareheaded with the wind blowing his hair about, extraordinarily exposed to everything. He looked very old. He looked, James thought, getting his head now against the Lighthouse, now against the waste of waters running away into the open, like some old stone lying on the sand; he looked as if he had become physically what was always at the back of both of their minds–that loneliness which was for both of them the truth about things.

He was reading very quickly, as if he were eager to get to the end. Indeed they were very close to the Lighthouse now. There it loomed up, stark and straight, glaring white and black, and one could see the waves breaking in white splinters like smashed glass upon the rocks. One could see lines and creases in the rocks. One could see the windows clearly; a dab of white on one of them, and a little tuft of green on the rock. A man had come out and looked at them through a glass and gone in again. So it was like that, James thought, the Lighthouse one had seen across the bay all these years; it was a stark tower on a bare rock. It satisfied him. It confirmed some obscure feeling of his about his own character. The old ladies, he thought, thinking of the garden at home, went dragging their chairs about on the lawn. Old Mrs. Beckwith, for example, was always saying how nice it was and how sweet it was and how they ought to be so proud and they ought to be so happy, but as a matter of fact, James thought, looking at the Lighthouse stood there on its rock, it's like that. He looked at his father reading fiercely with his legs curled tight. They shared that knowledge. "We are driving before a gale–we must sink," he began saying to himself, half aloud, exactly as his father said it.

Nobody seemed to have spoken for an age. Cam was tired of looking at the sea. Little bits of black cork had floated past; the fish were dead in the bottom of the boat. Still her father read, and James looked at him and she looked at him, and they vowed that they would fight tyranny to the death, and he went on reading quite unconscious of what they thought. It was thus that he escaped, she thought. Yes, with his great forehead and his great nose, holding his little mottled book firmly in front of him, he escaped. You might try to lay hands on him, but then like a bird, he spread his wings, he floated off to settle out of your reach somewhere far away on some desolate stump. She gazed at the immense expanse of the sea. The island had grown so small that it scarcely looked like a leaf any longer. It looked like the top of a rock which some wave bigger than the rest would cover. Yet in its frailty were all those paths, those terraces, those bedrooms–

all those innumerable things. But as, just before sleep, things simplify themselves so that only one of all the myriad details has power to assert itself, so, she felt, looking drowsily at the island, all those paths and terraces and bedrooms were fading and disappearing, and nothing was left but a pale blue censer swinging rhythmically this way and that across her mind. It was a hanging garden; it was a valley, full of birds, and flowers, and antelopes… She was falling asleep.

“Come now,” said Mr. Ramsay, suddenly shutting his book.

Come where? To what extraordinary adventure? She woke with a start. To land somewhere, to climb somewhere? Where was he leading them? For after his immense silence the words startled them. But it was absurd. He was hungry, he said. It was time for lunch. Besides, look, he said. “There’s the Lighthouse. We’re almost there.”

“He’s doing very well,” said Macalister, praising James. “He’s keeping her very steady.”

But his father never praised him, James thought grimly.

Mr. Ramsay opened the parcel and shared out the sandwiches among them. Now he was happy, eating bread and cheese with these fishermen. He would have liked to live in a cottage and lounge about in the harbour spitting with the other old men, James thought, watching him slice his cheese into thin yellow sheets with his penknife.

This is right, this is it, Cam kept feeling, as she peeled her hard-boiled egg. Now she felt as she did in the study when the old men were reading *The Times*. Now I can go on thinking whatever I like, and I shan’t fall over a precipice or be drowned, for there he is, keeping his eye on me, she thought.

At the same time they were sailing so fast along by the rocks that it was very exciting–it seemed as if they were doing two things at once; they were eating their lunch here in the sun and they were also making for safety in a great storm after a shipwreck. Would the water last? Would the provisions last? she asked herself, telling herself a story but knowing at the same time what was the truth.

They would soon be out of it, Mr. Ramsay was saying to old Macalister; but their children would see some strange things. Macalister said he was seventy-five last March; Mr. Ramsay was seventy-one. Macalister said he had never seen a doctor; he had never lost a tooth. And that’s the way I’d like my children to live–Cam was sure that her father was thinking that, for he stopped her throwing a sandwich into the sea and

told her, as if he were thinking of the fishermen and how they lived, that if she did not want it she should put it back in the parcel. She should not waste it. He said it so wisely, as if he knew so well all the things that happened in the world that she put it back at once, and then he gave her, from his own parcel, a gingerbread nut, as if he were a great Spanish gentleman, she thought, handing a flower to a lady at a window (so courteous his manner was). He was shabby, and simple, eating bread and cheese; and yet he was leading them on a great expedition where, for all she knew, they would be drowned.

“That was where she sunk,” said Macalister’s boy suddenly.

Three men were drowned where we are now, the old man said. He had seen them clinging to the mast himself. And Mr. Ramsay taking a look at the spot was about, James and Cam were afraid, to burst out:

But I beneath a rougher sea,[165]

and if he did, they could not bear it; they would shriek aloud; they could not endure another explosion of the passion that boiled in him; but to their surprise all he said was “Ah” as if he thought to himself. But why make a fuss about that? Naturally men are drowned in a storm, but it is a perfectly straightforward affair, and the depths of the sea (he sprinkled the crumbs from his sandwich paper over them) are only water after all. Then having lighted his pipe he took out his watch. He looked at it attentively; he made, perhaps, some mathematical calculation. At last he said, triumphantly:

“Well done!” James had steered them like a born sailor.

There! Cam thought, addressing herself silently to James. You’ve got it at last. For she knew that this was what James had been wanting, and she knew that now he had got it he was so pleased that he would not look at her or at his father or at any one. There he sat with his hand on the tiller sitting bolt upright, looking rather sulky and frowning slightly. He was so pleased that he was not going to let anybody share a grain of his pleasure. His father had praised him. They must think that he was perfectly indifferent. But you’ve got it now, Cam thought.

They had tacked, and they were sailing swiftly, buoyantly on long rocking waves which handed them on from one to another with an extraordinary lilt and exhilaration beside the reef. On the left a row of rocks showed brown through the water which thinned and

165. Cowper, as before; see note 113.

became greener and on one, a higher rock, a wave incessantly broke and spurted a little column of drops which fell down in a shower. One could hear the slap of the water and the patter of falling drops and a kind of hushing and hissing sound from the waves rolling and gambolling and slapping the rocks as if they were wild creatures who were perfectly free and tossed and tumbled and sported like this for ever.

Now they could see two men on the Lighthouse, watching them and making ready to meet them.

Mr. Ramsay buttoned his coat, and turned up his trousers. He took the large, badly packed, brown paper parcel which Nancy had got ready and sat with it on his knee. Thus in complete readiness to land he sat looking back at the island. With his long-sighted eyes perhaps he could see the dwindled leaf-like shape standing on end on a plate of gold quite clearly. What could he see? Cam wondered. It was all a blur to her. What was he thinking now? she wondered. What was it he sought, so fixedly, so intently, so silently? They watched him, both of them, sitting bareheaded with his parcel on his knee staring and staring at the frail blue shape which seemed like the vapour of something that had burnt itself away. What do you want? they both wanted to ask. They both wanted to say, Ask us anything and we will give it you. But he did not ask them anything. He sat and looked at the island and he might be thinking, We perished, each alone, or he might be thinking, I have reached it. I have found it; but he said nothing.

Then he put on his hat.

"Bring those parcels," he said, nodding his head at the things Nancy had done up for them to take to the Lighthouse. "The parcels for the Lighthouse men," he said. He rose and stood in the bow of the boat, very straight and tall, for all the world, James thought, as if he were saying, "There is no God,"[166] and Cam thought, as if he were leaping into space, and they both rose to follow him as he sprang, lightly like a young man, holding his parcel, on to the rock.

14

"He must have reached it," said Lily Briscoe aloud, feeling suddenly completely tired out. For the Lighthouse had become almost invisible, had melted away into a blue haze, and the effort of looking at it and the effort of thinking of him landing there, which both seemed to be

166. Leslie Stephen was openly an atheist, quite unusually for his time.

one and the same effort, had stretched her body and mind to the utmost. Ah, but she was relieved. Whatever she had wanted to give him, when he left her that morning, she had given him at last.

"He has landed," she said aloud. "It is finished." Then, surging up, puffing slightly, old Mr. Carmichael stood beside her, looking like an old pagan god, shaggy, with weeds in his hair and the trident (it was only a French novel) in his hand. He stood by her on the edge of the lawn, swaying a little in his bulk and said, shading his eyes with his hand: "They will have landed," and she felt that she had been right. They had not needed to speak. They had been thinking the same things and he had answered her without her asking him anything. He stood there as if he were spreading his hands over all the weakness and suffering of mankind; she thought he was surveying, tolerantly and compassionately, their final destiny. Now he has crowned the occasion, she thought, when his hand slowly fell, as if she had seen him let fall from his great height a wreath of violets and asphodels[167] which, fluttering slowly, lay at length upon the earth.

Quickly, as if she were recalled by something over there, she turned to her canvas. There it was–her picture. Yes, with all its greens and blues, its lines running up and across, its attempt at something. It would be hung in the attics, she thought; it would be destroyed. But what did that matter? she asked herself, taking up her brush again. She looked at the steps; they were empty; she looked at her canvas; it was blurred. With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision.

167. A reference to the flowers supposed to grow in the underworld of Greek mythology. Elsewhere in the book, they are associated with Mrs. Ramsay; see note 42.

155.

Professions for Women

Virginia Woolf

(A paper read to The Women's Service League in 1931)

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When your secretary invited me to come here, she told me that your Society is concerned with the employment of women and she suggested that I might tell you something about my own professional experiences. It is true I am a woman; it is true I am employed; but what professional experiences have I had? It is difficult to say. My profession is literature; and in that profession there are fewer experiences for women than in any other, with the exception of the stage — fewer, I mean, that are peculiar to women. For the road was cut many years ago — by Fanny Burney, by Aphra Behn, by Harriet Martineau, by Jane Austen, by George Eliot[1] — many famous women, and many more unknown and forgotten, have been before me, making the path smooth, and regulating my steps. Thus, when I came to write, there were very few material obstacles in my way. Writing was a reputable and harmless occupation. The family peace was not broken by the scratching of a pen. No demand was made upon the family purse. For ten and sixpence one can buy paper enough to write all the plays of Shakespeare — if one has a mind that way. Pianos and models, Paris, Vienna and Berlin, masters and mistresses, are not needed by a writer. The cheapness of writing paper is, of course, the reason why women have succeeded as writers before they have succeeded in the other professions.

But to tell you my story — it is a simple one. You have only got to figure to yourselves a girl in a bedroom with a pen in her hand. She had only to move that pen from left to right — from ten o'clock to one. Then it occurred to her to do what is simple and cheap enough after all — to slip a few of those pages into an envelope, fix a penny stamp in the corner, and drop the envelope into the red box at the corner. It was thus that I became a journalist; and my effort was rewarded on the first day of the following month — a very glorious day it was for me — by a letter from an editor containing a cheque for one pound ten shillings and sixpence. But to show you how little I deserve to be called a professional woman, how little I know of the struggles and difficulties of such lives, I have to admit that instead of spending that sum upon bread and butter, rent, shoes and stockings, or butcher's bills, I went out and bought a cat — a beautiful cat, a Persian cat, which very soon involved me in bitter disputes with my neighbours.

What could be easier than to write articles and to buy Persian cats with the profits? But wait a moment. Articles have to be about something. Mine, I seem to remember, was about a novel by a famous man. And while I was writing this review, I discovered that if I were going to review books I should need to do battle with a certain phantom. And the phantom was a woman, and when I came to know her better

1. All well-known English women writers: Fanny Burney (1752-1840), diarist and novelist; Aphra Behn (1640?-1689), dramatist; Harriet Martineau (1802-1876), novelist, children's writer, and social reformer; Jane Austen (1775-1817), novelist; and George Eliot, pen name of Marian Evans (1819-1880), novelist.

I called her after the heroine of a famous poem, The Angel in the House.[2] It was she who used to come between me and my paper when I was writing reviews. It was she who bothered me and wasted my time and so tormented me that at last I killed her. You who come of a younger and happier generation may not have heard of her — you may not know what I mean by the Angel in the House. I will describe her as shortly as I can. She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily. If there was chicken, she took the leg; if there was a draught she sat in it — in short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others. Above all — I need not say it —-she was pure. Her purity was supposed to be her chief beauty — her blushes, her great grace. In those days — the last of Queen Victoria — every house had its Angel. And when I came to write I encountered her with the very first words. The shadow of her wings fell on my page; I heard the rustling of her skirts in the room. Directly, that is to say, I took my pen in my hand to review that novel by a famous man, she slipped behind me and whispered: "My dear, you are a young woman. You are writing about a book that has been written by a man. Be sympathetic; be tender; flatter; deceive; use all the arts and wiles of our sex. Never let anybody guess that you have a mind of your own. Above all, be pure." And she made as if to guide my pen. I now record the one act for which I take some credit to myself, though the credit rightly belongs to some excellent ancestors of mine who left me a certain sum of money — shall we say five hundred pounds a year? — so that it was not necessary for me to depend solely on charm for my living. I turned upon her and caught her by the throat. I did my best to kill her. My excuse, if I were to be had up in a court of law, would be that I acted in self-defence. Had I not killed her she would have killed me. She would have plucked the heart out of my writing. For, as I found, directly I put pen to paper, you cannot review even a novel without having a mind of your own, without expressing what you think to be the truth about human relations, morality, sex. And all these questions, according to the Angel of the House, cannot be dealt with freely and openly by women; they must charm, they must conciliate, they must — to put it bluntly — tell lies if they are to succeed. Thus, whenever I felt the shadow of her wing or the radiance of her halo upon my page, I took up the inkpot and flung it at her. She died hard. Her fictitious nature was of great assistance to her. It is far harder to kill a phantom than a reality. She was always creeping back when I thought I had despatched her. Though I flatter myself that I killed her in the end, the struggle was severe; it took much time that had better have been spent upon learning Greek grammar; or in roaming the world in search of adventures. But it was a real experience; it was an experience that was bound to befall all women writers at that time. Killing the Angel in the House was part of the occupation of a woman writer.

But to continue my story. The Angel was dead; what then remained? You may say that what remained was a simple and common object — a young woman in a bedroom with an inkpot. In other words, now that she had rid herself of falsehood, that young woman had only to be herself. Ah, but what is "herself"? I mean, what is a woman? I assure you, I do not know. I do not believe that you know. I do not believe that anybody can know until she has expressed herself in all the arts and professions open to human skill. That indeed is one of the reasons why I have come here out of respect for you, who are in process of showing us by your experiments what a woman is, who are in process Of providing us, by your failures and successes, with that extremely important piece of information.

But to continue the story of my professional experiences. I made one pound ten and six by my first review; and I bought a Persian cat with the proceeds. Then I grew ambitious. A Persian cat is all very well, I said; but a Persian cat is not enough. I must have a motor car. And it was thus that I became a novelist — for it is a very strange thing that people will give you a motor car if you will tell them a

2. Coventry Patmore's Victorian poem (final form 1862), which depicted the ideal 19th century middle-class woman, as Woolf goes on to describe.

story. It is a still stranger thing that there is nothing so delightful in the world as telling stories. It is far pleasanter than writing reviews of famous novels. And yet, if I am to obey your secretary and tell you my professional experiences as a novelist, I must tell you about a very strange experience that befell me as a novelist. And to understand it you must try first to imagine a novelist's state of mind. I hope I am not giving away professional secrets if I say that a novelist's chief desire is to be as unconscious as possible. He has to induce in himself a state of perpetual lethargy. He wants life to proceed with the utmost quiet and regularity. He wants to see the same faces, to read the same books, to do the same things day after day, month after month, while he is writing, so that nothing may break the illusion in which he is living — so that nothing may disturb or disquiet the mysterious nosings about, feelings round, darts, dashes and sudden discoveries of that very shy and illusive spirit, the imagination. I suspect that this state is the same both for men and women. Be that as it may, I want you to imagine me writing a novel in a state of trance. I want you to figure to yourselves a girl sitting with a pen in her hand, which for minutes, and indeed for hours, she never dips into the inkpot. The image that comes to my mind when I think of this girl is the image of a fisherman lying sunk in dreams on the verge of a deep lake with a rod held out over the water. She was letting her imagination sweep unchecked round every rock and cranny of the world that lies submerged in the depths of our unconscious being. Now came the experience, the experience that I believe to be far commoner with women writers than with men. The line raced through the girl's fingers. Her imagination had rushed away. It had sought the pools, the depths, the dark places where the largest fish slumber. And then there was a smash. There was an explosion. There was foam and confusion. The imagination had dashed itself against something hard. The girl was roused from her dream. She was indeed in a state of the most acute and difficult distress. To speak without figure she had thought of something, something about the body, about the passions which it was unfitting for her as a woman to say. Men, her reason told her, would be shocked. The consciousness of — what men will say of a woman who speaks the truth about her passions had roused her from her artist's state of unconsciousness. She could write no more. The trance was over. Her imagination could work no longer. This I believe to be a very common experience with women writers — they are impeded by the extreme conventionality of the other sex. For though men sensibly allow themselves great freedom in these respects, I doubt that they realize or can control the extreme severity with which they condemn such freedom in women.

These then were two very genuine experiences of my own. These were two of the adventures of my professional life. The first — killing the Angel in the House — I think I solved. She died. But the second, telling the truth about my own experiences as a body, I do not think I solved. I doubt that any woman has solved it yet. The obstacles against her are still immensely powerful — and yet they are very difficult to define. Outwardly, what is simpler than to write books? Outwardly, what obstacles are there for a woman rather than for a man? Inwardly, I think, the case is very different; she has still many ghosts to fight, many prejudices to overcome. Indeed it will be a long time still, I think, before a woman can sit down to write a book without finding a phantom to be slain, a rock to be dashed against. And if this is so in literature, the freest of all professions for women, how is it in the new professions which you are now for the first time entering?

Those are the questions that I should like, had I time, to ask you. And indeed, if I have laid stress upon these professional experiences of mine, it is because I believe that they are, though in different forms, yours also. Even when the path is nominally open — when there is nothing to prevent a woman from being a doctor, a lawyer, a civil servant — there are many phantoms and obstacles, as I believe, looming in her way. To discuss and define them is I think of great value and importance; for thus only can the labour be shared, the difficulties be solved. But besides this, it is necessary also to discuss the ends and the aims for which we are fighting, for which we are doing battle with these formidable obstacles. Those aims cannot be taken for granted; they must be perpetually questioned and examined. The whole position, as I see it — here in this hall surrounded by women practising for the first time in history I

know not how many different professions — is one of extraordinary interest and importance. You have won rooms of your own[3] in the house hitherto exclusively owned by men. You are able, though not without great labour and effort, to pay the rent. You are earning your five hundred pounds a year. But this freedom is only a beginning — the room is your own, but it is still bare. It has to be furnished; it has to be decorated; it has to be shared. How are you going to furnish it, how are you going to decorate it? With whom are you going to share it, and upon what terms? These, I think are questions of the utmost importance and interest. For the first time in history you are able to ask them; for the first time you are able to decide for yourselves what the answers should be. Willingly would I stay and discuss those questions and answers — but not to-night. My time is up; and I must cease.

3. A reference to Woolf's earlier essay, "A Room of One's Own" (1929), which insists on the need for women's education and equality, and for their independence as writers and in every way.

156.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

To the Lighthouse

1. Consider the viewpoint of the children in the book. Writing from a child's perspective is a hallmark of modernism, and Woolf explores it frequently. How do the children's voices differ from those of the adults? How do they see the world?
2. Choose one of the houseguests—Charles Tansley, William Bankes, Augustus Carmichael, Minta Doyle, Paul Rayley, or Lily Briscoe—and discuss the character's isolation. Does he or she eventually find an answer to it?
3. Choose a symbol—the house, the lighthouse, the plant life, boats, the ocean, the *boeuf en daube*, etc.—and discuss what you think it means. What is its connection to a theme in the book?
4. Consider the issue of class conflict, especially through the portrayal of Mrs. McNab and Mrs. Bast, the housekeepers. What do you think the book says about class relations?
5. Look at the images associated with Mr. Ramsay, such as the alphabet. How do these help to characterize him?
6. Look at the images associated with Mrs. Ramsay, such as asphodel flowers. How do these help to characterize her?
7. Consider the impact of art on the book. You may wish to research modernist painters such as Woolf's sister Vanessa Bell, Gauguin, or Cezanne. You may also wish to compare these with earlier painters alluded to, such as Whistler and Sickert.
8. Choose a passage of one or two pages to investigate closely (an example might be the last page, when Lily completes her painting). What kind of words does Woolf use? What are her sentences like? Does the point of view shift? Whose is it? Discuss the way this passage creates a theme.

Professions for Women

1. Read Woolf's 1931 essay, "Professions for Women." Is Mrs. Ramsay an "Angel in the House" figure? How does her death relate? The popular Victorian image of the ideal wife/woman came to be "the Angel in the House"; she was expected to be devoted and submissive to her husband. The Angel was passive and powerless, meek, charming, graceful, sympathetic, self-sacrificing, pious,

and above all—pure. The phrase "Angel in the House" comes from the title of an immensely popular poem by Coventry Patmore, in which he holds his angel-wife up as a model for all women. Believing that his wife Emily was the perfect Victorian wife, he wrote "The Angel in the House" about her (originally published in 1854, revised through 1862). Though it did not receive much attention when it was first published in 1854, it became increasingly popular through the rest of the 19th century and continued to be influential into the 20th century. For Virginia Woolf, the repressive ideal of women represented by the Angel in the House was still so potent that she wrote, in 1931, "Killing the Angel in the House was part of the occupation of a woman writer."

Resources

Patmore's Poem

The following excerpt will give you a sense of the ideal woman and the male-female relationship presented by Patmore's poem "The Angel in the House":

Man must be pleased; but him to please
Is woman's pleasure; down the gulf
Of his condoled necessities
She casts her best, she flings herself.
How often flings for nought, and yokes
Her heart to an icicle or whim,
Whose each impatient word provokes
Another, not from her, but him;
While she, too gentle even to force
His penitence by kind replies,
Waits by, expecting his remorse,
With pardon in her pitying eyes;
And if he once, by shame oppress'd,
A comfortable word confers,
She leans and weeps against his breast,
And seems to think the sin was hers;
Or any eye to see her charms,
At any time, she's still his wife,
Dearly devoted to his arms;
She loves with love that cannot tire;
And when, ah woe, she loves alone,
Through passionate duty love springs higher,
As grass grows taller round a stone.

Initially, this ideal primarily expressed the values of the middle classes. However, Queen Victoria's devoting herself to her husband Prince Albert and to a domestic life encouraged the ideal to spread throughout 19th-century society.

XXIII

James Joyce (1882-1941)

157.

Biography



Figure 1: James Joyce 1915

James Joyce was born in Dublin, Ireland, on February 2, 1882, the eldest of 10 surviving children. He was educated by Jesuits at Clongowes Wood College and Belvedere College before going on to University College, then located on St Stephen's Green in Dublin, where he studied modern languages.

After he graduated from university, Joyce went to Paris, ostensibly to study medicine, and was recalled to Dublin in April 1903 because of the illness and subsequent death of his mother. He stayed in Ireland until 1904, and in June that year he met Nora Barncale, the Galway woman who was to become his partner and later his wife.

In August 1904, the first of Joyce's short stories was published in the *Irish Homestead* magazine, which later published two others. In October of that year, Joyce and Nora left Ireland going first to Pola

(now Pula, Croatia) where Joyce got a job teaching English at a Berlitz school. Joyce returned to Ireland only four times in his life, the last visit being in 1912, after which he never returned again.

Six months after their arrival in Pola, James and Nola moved to Trieste, Italy, where they spent most of the next 10 years. While there, they learned the local Triestino dialect, and Italian remained the family's home language for many years. Joyce wrote and published articles in Italian in the *Piccolo della Sera* newspaper and gave lectures on English literature. A portrait of Nora was painted by the Italian artist Tullio Silvestri in Trieste just before World War I. The James Joyce Centre in Dublin has on display a reproduction of this portrait.

The year 1914 proved a crucial one for Joyce. With Ezra Pound's assistance, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce's first novel, appeared in serial form in Harriet Weaver's *Egoist* magazine in London. His collection of short stories, *Dubliners*, on which he had been working since 1904, was finally published, and he also wrote his only play, *Exiles*. Having cleared his desk, Joyce could then start in earnest on the novel he had been thinking about since 1907: *Ulysses*.

With the start of World War I, Joyce and Nora, along with their two children, Giorgio and Lucia, were forced to leave Trieste. They moved to Zurich, Switzerland, where they lived for the duration of the war. The family had little money, relying on subventions from friends and family, people like Harriet Weaver in London, and Nora's uncle in Galway. They often ended up living in cramped, squalid accommodation as Joyce persisted in writing *Ulysses*. In fact, Joyce never really had a room or an office of his own in which to do his writing, and far from trying to block out the world around him while he wrote, Joyce included things going on around him as part of the book. Characteristics of his friends, Trieste, Zurich, and Paris are given to characters in the book, and, most notably, Nora's language and writing style become the voice of Molly Bloom in the novel.

Though Joyce wanted to settle in Trieste again after the war, the poet Ezra Pound persuaded him to come to Paris for a while, and Joyce stayed for the next 20 years. The publication of *Ulysses* in serial form in the American journal *The Little Review* was brought to a halt in 1921 when a court banned it as obscene. Shortly after, Harriet Weaver ran out of printers willing to set the text in England, and for a while it looked as though *Ulysses* would never be published.

In July 1920, Joyce met Sylvia Beach, an American expatriate living in Paris who owned and ran the bookshop Shakespeare & Co. In 1921, Beach offered to publish *Ulysses* and finally, on February 2, 1922, Joyce's 40th birthday, the first edition of the book was published. Beach continued to publish *Ulysses* through 1930.

After Beach gave up the rights to *Ulysses*, much of Joyce's business was taken over by Paul Léon, a Russian Jewish émigré living in Paris. As a close friend of Joyce and Joyce's family, Léon also became Joyce's business advisor, looking after his correspondence and dealing with his literary and legal affairs. The Léons' apartment became a centre for Joyce studies, and Léon and others met Joyce there to discuss translations of *Ulysses* and the early serial publications of what became *Finnegans Wake*.

For the next 10 years, Joyce and Léon were in almost daily contact, and Léon came to assume a role as necessary and important to Joyce and his work as Sylvia Beach had played in the 1920s. Not only did he manage Joyce's legal, financial, and daily existence, much as Beach had during the years she published *Ulysses*, Léon played an essential part in the composition and proofreading of Joyce's last work and perhaps most challenging work, *Finnegans Wake*, which was published on May 4, 1939. It was immediately listed as "the book of the week" in the United Kingdom and the United States.

In 1940, when Joyce fled to the south of France ahead of the Nazi invasion, Léon returned to the Joyces' apartment in Paris to salvage their belongings and put them into safekeeping for the duration of the war, and it's thanks to Léon's efforts that much of Joyce's personal possessions and manuscripts survived.

Joyce died at the age of 59 on January 13, 1941, at 2 a.m., in Zurich, where he and his family had been given asylum. He is buried in Fluntern cemetery, Zurich.

[Biography from *The James Joyce Centre, Dublin*]

See a useful introduction to *Dubliners* and a detailed biography of Joyce.

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158.

Dubliners: Araby

James Joyce

NORTH RICHMOND STREET being blind[1], was a quiet street except at the hour when the Christian Brothers' School set the boys free. An uninhabited house of two storeys stood at the blind end, detached from its neighbours in a square ground The other houses of the street, conscious of decent lives within them, gazed at one another with brown imperturbable faces.

The former tenant of our house, a priest, had died in the back drawing-room. Air, musty from having been long enclosed, hung in all the rooms, and the waste room behind the kitchen was littered with old useless papers. Among these I found a few paper-covered books, the pages of which were curled and damp: *The Abbot*,[2] by Walter Scott, *The Devout Communicant* [3]and *The Memoirs of Vidocq*.[4] I liked the last best because its leaves were yellow. The wild garden behind the house contained a central apple-tree and a few straggling bushes under one of which I found the late tenant's rusty bicycle-pump. He had been a very charitable priest; in his will he had left all his money to institutions and the furniture of his house to his sister.

When the short days of winter came dusk fell before we had well eaten our dinners. When we met in the street the houses had grown sombre. The space of sky above us was the colour of ever-changing violet and towards it the lamps of the street lifted their feeble lanterns. The cold air stung us and we played till our bodies glowed. Our shouts echoed in the silent street. The career of our play brought us through the dark muddy lanes behind the houses where we ran the gauntlet of the rough tribes from the cottages[5], to the back doors of the dark dripping gardens where odours arose from the ashpits, to the dark odorous stables where a coachman smoothed and combed the horse or shook music from the buckled harness. When we returned to the street light from the kitchen windows had filled the areas. If my uncle was seen turning the corner we hid in the shadow until we had seen him safely housed. Or if Mangan's sister came out on the doorstep to call her brother in to his tea we watched her from our shadow peer up and down the street. We waited to see whether she would remain or go in and, if she remained, we left our shadow and walked up to Mangan's steps resignedly. She was waiting for us, her figure defined by the light from the half-opened door. Her brother always teased her before he obeyed and I stood by the railings looking at her. Her dress swung as she moved her body and the soft rope of her hair tossed from side to side.

Every morning I lay on the floor in the front parlour watching her door. The blind was pulled down to within an inch of the sash so that I could not be seen. When she came out on the doorstep my heart leaped. I ran to the hall, seized my books and followed her. I kept her brown figure always in my eye and, when we came near the point at which our ways diverged, I quickened my pace and passed her.

1. A dead-end street.
2. A historical romance (1820). In this novel, the young hero becomes the guardian of Mary, Queen of Scots' state secrets.
3. Subtitled "Pious Meditations and Aspirations for the Three Days Before and the Three Days After Receiving the Holy Eucharist," by English Franciscan friar Pacificus Baker (1775-1857).
4. Memoirs of François-Eugène Vidocq, originally a criminal, turned French police detective. The Memoirs were first published in 1828.
5. Small dwellings for the poor.

This happened morning after morning. I had never spoken to her, except for a few casual words, and yet her name was like a summons to all my foolish blood.

Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to romance. On Saturday evenings when my aunt went marketing I had to go to carry some of the parcels. We walked through the flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of labourers, the shrill litanies of shop-boys who stood on guard by the barrels of pigs' cheeks, the nasal chanting of street-singers, who sang a *come-all-you*[6] about O'Donovan Rossa, or a ballad about the troubles in our native land. These noises converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes. Her name sprang to my lips at moments in strange prayers and praises which I myself did not understand. My eyes were often full of tears (I could not tell why) and at times a flood from my heart seemed to pour itself out into my bosom. I thought little of the future. I did not know whether I would ever speak to her or not or, if I spoke to her, how I could tell her of my confused adoration. But my body was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires.

One evening I went into the back drawing-room in which the priest had died. It was a dark rainy evening and there was no sound in the house. Through one of the broken panes I heard the rain impinge upon the earth, the fine incessant needles of water playing in the sodden beds. Some distant lamp or lighted window gleamed below me. I was thankful that I could see so little. All my senses seemed to desire to veil themselves and, feeling that I was about to slip from them, I pressed the palms of my hands together until they trembled, murmuring: "*O love! O love!*" many times.

At last she spoke to me. When she addressed the first words to me I was so confused that I did not know what to answer. She asked me was I going to *Araby*.[7] I forgot whether I answered yes or no. It would be a splendid bazaar, she said she would love to go.

"And why can't you?" I asked.

While she spoke she turned a silver bracelet round and round her wrist. She could not go, she said, because there would be a retreat that week in her convent. Her brother and two other boys were fighting for their caps and I was alone at the railings. She held one of the spikes, bowing her head towards me. The light from the lamp opposite our door caught the white curve of her neck, lit up her hair that rested there and, falling, lit up the hand upon the railing. It fell over one side of her dress and caught the white border of a petticoat, just visible as she stood at ease.

"It's well for you," she said.

"If I go," I said, "I will bring you something."

What innumerable follies laid waste my waking and sleeping thoughts after that evening! I wished to annihilate the tedious intervening days. I chafed against the work of school. At night in my bedroom and by day in the classroom her image came between me and the page I strove to read. The syllables of the word *Araby* were called to me through the silence in which my soul luxuriated and cast an Eastern enchantment over me. I asked for leave to go to the bazaar on Saturday night. My aunt was surprised and hoped it was not some Freemason[8] affair. I answered few questions in class. I watched my master's face pass from amiability to sternness; he hoped I was not beginning to idle. I could not call my wandering thoughts together. I had hardly any patience with the serious work of life which, now that it stood between me and my desire, seemed to me child's play, ugly monotonous child's play.

On Saturday morning I reminded my uncle that I wished to go to the bazaar in the evening. He was fussing at the hallstand, looking for the hat-brush, and answered me curtly:

6. A topical ballad, in this case, one about the exploits of Fenian leader Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa (1851-1915).
7. The young Joyce attended the Araby Bazaar in 1894. The term "Araby" held exotic, romantic connotations in 19th-century British Empire, particularly after the reception of such works as Fitzgerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (1859) and Sir Richard Burton's version of the Arabian Nights (1885-88).
8. A fraternal organization to which the Roman Catholic Church objected.

"Yes, boy, I know."

As he was in the hall I could not go into the front parlour and lie at the window. I left the house in bad humour and walked slowly towards the school. The air was pitilessly raw and already my heart misgave me.

When I came home to dinner my uncle had not yet been home. Still it was early. I sat staring at the clock for some time and. when its ticking began to irritate me, I left the room. I mounted the staircase and gained the upper part of the house. The high cold empty gloomy rooms liberated me and I went from room to room singing. From the front window I saw my companions playing below in the street. Their cries reached me weakened and indistinct and, leaning my forehead against the cool glass, I looked over at the dark house where she lived. I may have stood there for an hour, seeing nothing but the brown-clad figure cast by my imagination, touched discreetly by the lamplight at the curved neck, at the hand upon the railings and at the border below the dress.

When I came downstairs again I found Mrs. Mercer sitting at the fire. She was an old garrulous woman, a pawnbroker's widow, who collected used stamps for some pious purpose. I had to endure the gossip of the tea-table. The meal was prolonged beyond an hour and still my uncle did not come. Mrs. Mercer stood up to go: she was sorry she couldn't wait any longer, but it was after eight o'clock and she did not like to be out late as the night air was bad for her. When she had gone I began to walk up and down the room, clenching my fists. My aunt said:

"I'm afraid you may put off your bazaar for this night of Our Lord."

At nine o'clock I heard my uncle's latchkey in the halldoor. I heard him talking to himself and heard the hallstand rocking when it had received the weight of his overcoat. I could interpret these signs. When he was midway through his dinner I asked him to give me the money to go to the bazaar. He had forgotten.

"The people are in bed and after their first sleep now," he said.

I did not smile. My aunt said to him energetically:

"Can't you give him the money and let him go? You've kept him late enough as it is."

My uncle said he was very sorry he had forgotten. He said he believed in the old saying: "*All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.*" He asked me where I was going and, when I had told him a second time he asked me did I know *The Arab's Farewell to his Steed*.[9] When I left the kitchen he was about to recite the opening lines of the piece to my aunt.

I held a florin[10] tightly in my hand as I strode down Buckingham Street towards the station. The sight of the streets thronged with buyers and glaring with gas recalled to me the purpose of my journey. I took my seat in a third-class carriage of a deserted train. After an intolerable delay the train moved out of the station slowly. It crept onward among ruinous house and over the twinkling river. At Westland Row Station a crowd of people pressed to the carriage doors; but the porters moved them back, saying that it was a special train for the bazaar. I remained alone in the bare carriage. In a few minutes the train drew up beside an improvised wooden platform. I passed out on to the road and saw by the lighted dial of a clock that it was ten minutes to ten. In front of me was a large building which displayed the magical name.

I could not find any sixpenny entrance and, fearing that the bazaar would be closed, I passed in quickly through a turnstile, handing a shilling to a weary-looking man. I found myself in a big hall girdled at half its height by a gallery. Nearly all the stalls were closed and the greater part of the hall was in darkness. I recognised a silence like that which pervades a church after a service. I walked into the centre of the bazaar timidly. A few people were gathered about the stalls which were still open. Before a curtain, over

9. A popular romantic poem by Caroline Norton (1808-1877).
10. A two-shilling coin.

which the words Cafe Chantant[11] were written in coloured lamps, two men were counting money on a salver. I listened to the fall of the coins.[12]

Remembering with difficulty why I had come I went over to one of the stalls and examined porcelain vases and flowered tea-sets. At the door of the stall a young lady was talking and laughing with two young gentlemen. I remarked their English accents and listened vaguely to their conversation.

"O, I never said such a thing!"

"O, but you did!"

"O, but I didn't!"

"Didn't she say that?"

"Yes. I heard her."

"0, there's a . . . fib!"

Observing me the young lady came over and asked me did I wish to buy anything. The tone of her voice was not encouraging; she seemed to have spoken to me out of a sense of duty. I looked humbly at the great jars that stood like eastern guards at either side of the dark entrance to the stall and murmured:

"No, thank you."

The young lady changed the position of one of the vases and went back to the two young men. They began to talk of the same subject. Once or twice the young lady glanced at me over her shoulder.

I lingered before her stall, though I knew my stay was useless, to make my interest in her wares seem the more real. Then I turned away slowly and walked down the middle of the bazaar. I allowed the two pennies to fall against the sixpence in my pocket. I heard a voice call from one end of the gallery that the light was out. The upper part of the hall was now completely dark.

Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger.

11. In France, a coffeehouse with entertainment.
12. cf. Matthew 21: 12-13, Jesus confronts the moneylenders at the temple. A salver was derived from "saviour" and was originally used to catch drops of wine from the chalice placed upon it.

159.

Dubliners: Eveline

James Joyce

SHE sat at the window[1] watching the evening invade the avenue. Her head was leaned against the window curtains and in her nostrils was the odour of dusty cretonne.[2] She was tired.

Few people passed. The man out of the last house passed on his way home; she heard his footsteps clacking along the concrete pavement and afterwards crunching on the cinder path before the new red houses. One time there used to be a field there in which they used to play every evening with other people's children. Then a man from Belfast bought the field and built houses in it — not like their little brown houses but bright brick houses with shining roofs. The children of the avenue used to play together in that field — the Devines, the Waters, the Dunns, little Keogh the cripple, she and her brothers and sisters. Ernest, however, never played: he was too grown up. Her father used often to hunt them in out of the field with his blackthorn stick; but usually little Keogh used to keep nix and call out when he saw her father coming. Still they seemed to have been rather happy then. Her father was not so bad then; and besides, her mother was alive. That was a long time ago; she and her brothers and sisters were all grown up her mother was dead. Tizzie Dunn was dead, too, and the Waters had gone back to England. Everything changes. Now she was going to go away like the others, to leave her home.

Home! She looked round the room, reviewing all its familiar objects which she had dusted once a week for so many years, wondering where on earth all the dust came from. Perhaps she would never see again those familiar objects from which she had never dreamed of being divided. And yet during all those years she had never found out the name of the priest whose yellowing photograph hung on the wall above the broken harmonium beside the coloured print of the promises made to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque.[3] He had been a school friend of her father. Whenever he showed the photograph to a visitor her father used to pass it with a casual word:

"He is in Melbourne now."

She had consented to go away, to leave her home. Was that wise? She tried to weigh each side of the question. In her home anyway she had shelter and food; she had those whom she had known all her life about her. O course she had to work hard, both in the house and at business. What would they say of her in the Stores when they found out that she had run away with a fellow? Say she was a fool, perhaps; and her place would be filled up by advertisement. Miss Gavan would be glad. She had always had an edge on her[4], especially whenever there were people listening.

"Miss Hill, don't you see these ladies are waiting?"

"Look lively, Miss Hill, please."

She would not cry many tears at leaving the Stores.

But in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not be like that. Then she would be

1. cf. Tennyson's Lady of Shalott, whose fate is sealed once she looks out the window.
2. A strong unglazed cotton or linen cloth used for curtains.
3. Canonized in 1920, a French nun (1647-1690), famed for "the Great Revelations of the Sacred Heart," in which Christ made 12 promises to her.
4. Sharp, sarcastic manner.

married — she, Eveline. People would treat her with respect then. She would not be treated as her mother had been. Even now, though she was over nineteen, she sometimes felt herself in danger of her father's violence. She knew it was that that had given her the palpitations. When they were growing up he had never gone for her like he used to go for Harry and Ernest, because she was a girl but latterly he had begun to threaten her and say what he would do to her only for her dead mother's sake. And no she had nobody to protect her. Ernest was dead and Harry, who was in the church decorating business, was nearly always down somewhere in the country. Besides, the invariable squabble for money on Saturday nights had begun to weary her unspeakably. She always gave her entire wages — seven shillings — and Harry always sent up what he could but the trouble was to get any money from her father. He said she used to squander the money, that she had no head, that he wasn't going to give her his hard-earned money to throw about the streets, and much more, for he was usually fairly bad on Saturday night. In the end he would give her the money and ask her had she any intention of buying Sunday's dinner. Then she had to rush out as quickly as she could and do her marketing, holding her black leather purse tightly in her hand as she elbowed her way through the crowds and returning home late under her load of provisions. She had hard work to keep the house together and to see that the two young children who had been left to her charge went to school regularly and got their meals regularly. It was hard work — a hard life — but now that she was about to leave it she did not find it a wholly undesirable life.

She was about to explore another life with Frank. Frank was very kind, manly, open-hearted. She was to go away with him by the night-boat to be his wife and to live with him in Buenos Ayres where he had a home waiting for her. How well she remembered the first time she had seen him; he was lodging in a house on the main road where she used to visit. It seemed a few weeks ago. He was standing at the gate, his peaked cap pushed back on his head and his hair tumbled forward over a face of bronze. Then they had come to know each other. He used to meet her outside the Stores every evening and see her home. He took her to see *The Bohemian Girl*[5] and she felt elated as she sat in an unaccustomed part of the theatre with him. He was awfully fond of music and sang a little. People knew that they were courting and, when he sang about the lass that loves a sailor, she always felt pleasantly confused. He used to call her Poppens out of fun. First of all it had been an excitement for her to have a fellow and then she had begun to like him. He had tales of distant countries. He had started as a deck boy at a pound a month on a ship of the Allan Line going out to Canada. He told her the names of the ships he had been on and the names of the different services. He had sailed through the Straits of Magellan and he told her stories of the terrible Patagonians. He had fallen on his feet in Buenos Ayres, he said, and had come over to the old country just for a holiday. Of course, her father had found out the affair and had forbidden her to have anything to say to him.

"I know these sailor chaps," he said.

One day he had quarrelled with Frank and after that she had to meet her lover secretly.

The evening deepened in the avenue. The white of two letters in her lap grew indistinct. One was to Harry; the other was to her father. Ernest had been her favourite but she liked Harry too. Her father was becoming old lately, she noticed; he would miss her. Sometimes he could be very nice. Not long before, when she had been laid up for a day, he had read her out a ghost story and made toast for her at the fire. Another day, when their mother was alive, they had all gone for a picnic to the Hill of Howth. She remembered her father putting on her mother's bonnet to make the children laugh.

Her time was running out but she continued to sit by the window, leaning her head against the window curtain, inhaling the odour of dusty cretonne. Down far in the avenue she could hear a street organ playing. She knew the air. Strange that it should come that very night to remind her of the promise to her mother, her promise to keep the home together as long as she could. She remembered the last night

5. An opera by Michael Balfe (1808-1870). It contains a heroine ready to run away with the hero.

of her mother's illness; she was again in the close dark room at the other side of the hall and outside she heard a melancholy air of Italy. The organ-player had been ordered to go away and given sixpence. She remembered her father strutting back into the sickroom saying:

"Damned Italians! coming over here!"

As she mused the pitiful vision of her mother's life laid its spell on the very quick of her being — that life of commonplace sacrifices closing in final craziness. She trembled as she heard again her mother's voice saying constantly with foolish insistence:

"Derevaun Seraun! Derevaun Seraun!"[6]

She stood up in a sudden impulse of terror. Escape! She must escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life, perhaps love, too. But she wanted to live. Why should she be unhappy? She had a right to happiness. Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms. He would save her.

She stood among the swaying crowd in the station at the North Wall.[7] He held her hand and she knew that he was speaking to her, saying something about the passage over and over again. The station was full of soldiers with brown baggages. Through the wide doors of the sheds she caught a glimpse of the black mass of the boat, lying in beside the quay wall, with illumined portholes. She answered nothing. She felt her cheek pale and cold and, out of a maze of distress, she prayed to God to direct her, to show her what was her duty. The boat blew a long mournful whistle into the mist. If she went, tomorrow she would be on the sea with Frank, steaming towards Buenos Ayres. Their passage had been booked. Could she still draw back after all he had done for her? Her distress awoke a nausea in her body and she kept moving her lips in silent fervent prayer.

A bell clanged upon her heart. She felt him seize her hand:

"Come!"

All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them: he would drown her. She gripped with both hands at the iron railing.

"Come!"

No! No! No! It was impossible. Her hands clutched the iron in frenzy. Amid the seas she sent a cry of anguish.

"Eveline! Evvy!"

He rushed beyond the barrier and called to her to follow. He was shouted at to go on but he still called to her. She set her white face to him, passive, like a helpless animal. Her eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell or recognition.

6. Possibly a loose Gaelic equivalent of "The end of pleasure is pain."

7. A quayside dock on the north bank of the River Liffey.

160.

Dubliners: After the Race

James Joyce

After the Race[1]

THE cars came scudding in towards Dublin, running evenly like pellets in the groove of the Naas Road.[2] At the crest of the hill at Inchicore[3] sightseers had gathered in clumps to watch the cars careering homeward and through this channel of poverty and inaction the Continent sped its wealth and industry. Now and again the clumps of people raised the cheer of the gratefully oppressed. Their sympathy, however, was for the blue cars — the cars of their friends, the French.

The French, moreover, were virtual victors. Their team had finished solidly; they had been placed second and third and the driver of the winning German car was reported a Belgian. Each blue car, therefore, received a double measure of welcome as it topped the crest of the hill and each cheer of welcome was acknowledged with smiles and nods by those in the car. In one of these trimly built cars was a party of four young men whose spirits seemed to be at present well above the level of successful Gallicism: in fact, these four young men were almost hilarious. They were Charles Ségouin, the owner of the car; André Rivière, a young electrician of Canadian birth; a huge Hungarian named Villona and a neatly groomed young man named Doyle. Ségouin was in good humour because he had unexpectedly received some orders in advance (he was about to start a motor establishment in Paris) and Rivière was in good humour because he was to be appointed manager of the establishment; these two young men (who were cousins) were also in good humour because of the success of the French cars. Villona was in good humour because he had had a very satisfactory luncheon; and besides he was an optimist by nature. The fourth member of the party, however, was too excited to be genuinely happy.

He was about twenty-six years of age, with a soft, light brown moustache and rather innocent-looking grey eyes. His father, who had begun life as an advanced Nationalist,[4] had modified his views early. He had made his money as a butcher in Kingstown and by opening shops in Dublin and in the suburbs he had made his money many times over. He had also been fortunate enough to secure some of the police contracts and in the end he had become rich enough to be alluded to in the Dublin newspapers as a merchant prince. He had sent his son to England to be educated in a big Catholic college and had afterwards sent him to Dublin University to study law. Jimmy did not study very earnestly and took to bad courses for a while. He had money and he was popular; and he divided his time curiously between musical and motoring circles. Then he had been sent for a term to Cambridge to see a little life. His father, remonstrative, but covertly proud of the excess, had paid his bills and brought him home. It was at Cambridge that he had met Ségouin. They were not much more than acquaintances as yet but Jimmy found great pleasure in the society of one who had seen so much of the world and was reputed to own some of the biggest hotels in France. Such a person (as his father agreed) was well worth knowing, even

1. The race in question, which took place on July 2, 1903, was the Gordon Bennett Cup, a forerunner of the Grand Prix series of automobile races.
2. Rhymes with "grace." A town to the southeast of Dublin.
3. Village on the south bank of the Liffey.
4. A strong supporter of Home Rule.

if he had not been the charming companion he was. Villona was entertaining also — a brilliant pianist — but, unfortunately, very poor.

The car ran on merrily with its cargo of hilarious youth. The two cousins sat on the front seat; Jimmy and his Hungarian friend sat behind. Decidedly Villona was in excellent spirits; he kept up a deep bass hum of melody for miles of the road. The Frenchmen flung their laughter and light words over their shoulders and often Jimmy had to strain forward to catch the quick phrase. This was not altogether pleasant for him, as he had nearly always to make a deft guess at the meaning and shout back a suitable answer in the face of a high wind. Besides Villona's humming would confuse anybody; the noise of the car, too.

Rapid motion through space elates one; so does notoriety; so does the possession of money. These were three good reasons for Jimmy's excitement. He had been seen by many of his friends that day in the company of these Continentals. At the control[5] Ségouin had presented him to one of the French competitors and, in answer to his confused murmur of compliment, the swarthy face of the driver had disclosed a line of shining white teeth. It was pleasant after that honour to return to the profane world of spectators amid nudges and significant looks. Then as to money — he really had a great sum under his control. Ségouin, perhaps, would not think it a great sum but Jimmy who, in spite of temporary errors, was at heart the inheritor of solid instincts, knew well with what difficulty it had been got together. This knowledge had previously kept his bills within the limits of reasonable recklessness, and if he had been so conscious of the labour latent in money when there had been question merely of some freak of the higher intelligence, how much more so now when he was about to stake the greater part of his substance! It was a serious thing for him.

Of course, the investment was a good one and Ségouin had managed to give the impression that it was by a favour of friendship the mite of Irish money was to be included in the capital of the concern. Jimmy had a respect for his father's shrewdness in business matters and in this case it had been his father who had first suggested the investment; money to be made in the motor business, pots of money. Moreover Ségouin had the unmistakable air of wealth. Jimmy set out to translate into days' work that lordly car in which he sat. How smoothly it ran. In what style they had come careering along the country roads! The journey laid a magical finger on the genuine pulse of life and gallantly the machinery of human nerves strove to answer the bounding courses of the swift blue animal.

They drove down Dame Street. The street was busy with unusual traffic, loud with the horns of motorists and the gongs of impatient tram-drivers. Near the Bank[6] Ségouin drew up and Jimmy and his friend alighted. A little knot of people collected on the footpath to pay homage to the snorting motor. The party was to dine together that evening in Ségouin's hotel and, meanwhile, Jimmy and his friend, who was staying with him, were to go home to dress. The car steered out slowly for Grafton Street[7] while the two young men pushed their way through the knot of gazers. They walked northward with a curious feeling of disappointment in the exercise, while the city hung its pale globes of light above them in a haze of summer evening.

In Jimmy's house this dinner had been pronounced an occasion. A certain pride mingled with his parents' trepidation, a certain eagerness, also, to play fast and loose for the names of great foreign cities have at least this virtue. Jimmy, too, looked very well when he was dressed and, as he stood in the hall giving a last equation to the bows of his dress tie, his father may have felt even commercially satisfied at having secured for his son qualities often unpurchaseable. His father, therefore, was unusually friendly with Villona and his manner expressed a real respect for foreign accomplishments; but this subtlety of his host was probably lost upon the Hungarian, who was beginning to have a sharp desire for his dinner.

5. One of the timing stages in the race.

6. The Bank of Ireland.

7. The most fashionable Dublin street.

The dinner was excellent, exquisite. Ségouin, Jimmy decided, had a very refined taste. The party was increased by a young Englishman named Routh whom Jimmy had seen with Ségouin at Cambridge. The young men supped in a snug room lit by electric candle lamps. They talked volubly and with little reserve. Jimmy, whose imagination was kindling, conceived the lively youth of the Frenchmen twined elegantly upon the firm framework of the Englishman's manner. A graceful image of his, he thought, and a just one. He admired the dexterity with which their host directed the conversation. The five young men had various tastes and their tongues had been loosened. Villona, with immense respect, began to discover to the mildly surprised Englishman the beauties of the English madrigal, deploring the loss of old instruments. Rivière, not wholly ingenuously, undertook to explain to Jimmy the triumph of the French mechanicians. The resonant voice of the Hungarian was about to prevail in ridicule of the spurious lutes of the romantic painters when Ségouin shepherded his party into politics. Here was congenial ground for all. Jimmy, under generous influences, felt the buried zeal of his father wake to life within him: he aroused the torpid Routh at last. The room grew doubly hot and Ségouin's task grew harder each moment: there was even danger of personal spite. The alert host at an opportunity lifted his glass to Humanity and, when the toast had been drunk, he threw open a window significantly.

That night the city wore the mask of a capital. The five young men strolled along Stephen's Green in a faint cloud of aromatic smoke. They talked loudly and gaily and their cloaks dangled from their shoulders. The people made way for them. At the corner of Grafton Street a short fat man was putting two handsome ladies on a car in charge of another fat man. The car drove off and the short fat man caught sight of the party.

"André."

"It's Farley!"

A torrent of talk followed. Farley was an American. No one knew very well what the talk was about. Villona and Rivière were the noisiest, but all the men were excited. They got up on a car, squeezing themselves together amid much laughter. They drove by the crowd, blended now into soft colours, to a music of merry bells. They took the train at Westland Row and in a few seconds, as it seemed to Jimmy, they were walking out of Kingstown Station. The ticket-collector saluted Jimmy; he was an old man:

"Fine night, sir!"

It was a serene summer night; the harbour lay like a darkened mirror at their feet. They proceeded towards it with linked arms, singing *Cadet Roussel*[8] in chorus, stamping their feet at every:

"*Ho! Ho! Hohé, vraiment!*"

They got into a rowboat at the slip and made out for the American's yacht. There was to be supper, music, cards. Villona said with conviction:

"It is delightful!"

There was a yacht piano in the cabin. Villona played a waltz for Farley and Rivière, Farley acting as cavalier and Rivière as lady. Then an impromptu square dance, the men devising original figures. What merriment! Jimmy took his part with a will; this was seeing life, at least. Then Farley got out of breath and cried "*Stop!*" A man brought in a light supper, and the young men sat down to it for form's sake. They drank, however: it was Bohemian. They drank Ireland, England, France, Hungary, the United States of America. Jimmy made a speech, a long speech, Villona saying: "*Hear! hear!*" whenever there was a pause. There was a great clapping of hands when he sat down. It must have been a good speech. Farley clapped him on the back and laughed loudly. What jovial fellows! What good company they were!

Cards! cards! The table was cleared. Villona returned quietly to his piano and played voluntaries for them. The other men played game after game, flinging themselves boldly into the adventure. They drank

8. A popular French satirical song.

the health of the Queen of Hearts and of the Queen of Diamonds. Jimmy felt obscurely the lack of an audience: the wit was flashing. Play ran very high and paper began to pass. Jimmy did not know exactly who was winning but he knew that he was losing. But it was his own fault for he frequently mistook his cards and the other men had to calculate his I.O.U.'s for him. They were devils of fellows but he wished they would stop: it was getting late. Someone gave the toast of the yacht *The Belle of Newport* and then someone proposed one great game for a finish.

The piano had stopped; Villona must have gone up on deck. It was a terrible game. They stopped just before the end of it to drink for luck. Jimmy understood that the game lay between Routh and Ségouin. What excitement! Jimmy was excited too; he would lose, of course. How much had he written away? The men rose to their feet to play the last tricks, talking and gesticulating. Routh won. The cabin shook with the young men's cheering and the cards were bundled together. They began then to gather in what they had won. Farley and Jimmy were the heaviest losers.

He knew that he would regret in the morning but at present he was glad of the rest, glad of the dark stupor that would cover up his folly. He leaned his elbows on the table and rested his head between his hands, counting the beats of his temples. The cabin door opened and he saw the Hungarian standing in a shaft of grey light:

"Daybreak, gentlemen!"

161.

Dubliners: Counterparts

James Joyce

THE bell rang furiously and, when Miss Parker went to the tube[1], a furious voice called out in a piercing North of Ireland accent:

"Send Farrington here!"

Miss Parker returned to her machine, saying to a man who was writing at a desk:

"Mr. Alleyne wants you upstairs."

The man muttered "*Blast him!*" under his breath and pushed back his chair to stand up. When he stood up he was tall and of great bulk. He had a hanging face, dark wine-coloured, with fair eyebrows and moustache: his eyes bulged forward slightly and the whites of them were dirty. He lifted up the counter and, passing by the clients, went out of the office with a heavy step.

He went heavily upstairs until he came to the second landing, where a door bore a brass plate with the inscription *Mr. Alleyne*. Here he halted, puffing with labour and vexation, and knocked. The shrill voice cried:

"Come in!"

The man entered Mr. Alleyne's room. Simultaneously Mr. Alleyne, a little man wearing gold-rimmed glasses on a cleanshaven face, shot his head up over a pile of documents. The head itself was so pink and hairless it seemed like a large egg reposing on the papers. Mr. Alleyne did not lose a moment:

"Farrington? What is the meaning of this? Why have I always to complain of you? May I ask you why you haven't made a copy of that contract between Bodley and Kirwan? I told you it must be ready by four o'clock."

"But Mr. Shelley said, sir ——"

"*Mr. Shelley said, sir* . . . . Kindly attend to what I say and not to what Mr. Shelley says, sir. You have always some excuse or another for shirking work. Let me tell you that if the contract is not copied before this evening I'll lay the matter before Mr. Crosbie. . . . Do you hear me now?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you hear me now? . . . Ay and another little matter! I might as well be talking to the wall as talking to you. Understand once for all that you get a half an hour for your lunch and not an hour and a half. How many courses do you want, I'd like to know. . . . Do you mind me now?"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Alleyne bent his head again upon his pile of papers. The man stared fixedly at the polished skull which directed the affairs of Crosbie & Alleyne, gauging its fragility. A spasm of rage gripped his throat for a few moments and then passed, leaving after it a sharp sensation of thirst. The man recognised the sensation and felt that he must have a good night's drinking. The middle of the month was passed and, if he could get the copy done in time, Mr. Alleyne might give him an order on the cashier. He stood still, gazing fixedly at the head upon the pile of papers. Suddenly Mr. Alleyne began to upset all the papers,

1. Voice-tube, an early type of office intercom.

searching for something. Then, as if he had been unaware of the man's presence till that moment, he shot up his head again, saying:

"Eh? Are you going to stand there all day? Upon my word, Farrington, you take things easy!"

"I was waiting to see . . . "

"Very good, you needn't wait to see. Go downstairs and do your work."

The man walked heavily towards the door and, as he went out of the room, he heard Mr. Alleyne cry after him that if the contract was not copied by evening Mr. Crosbie would hear of the matter.

He returned to his desk in the lower office and counted the sheets which remained to be copied. He took up his pen and dipped it in the ink but he continued to stare stupidly at the last words he had written: *In no case shall the said Bernard Bodley be* . . . The evening was falling and in a few minutes they would be lighting the gas: then he could write. He felt that he must slake the thirst in his throat. He stood up from his desk and, lifting the counter as before, passed out of the office. As he was passing out the chief clerk looked at him inquiringly.

"It's all right, Mr. Shelley," said the man, pointing with his finger to indicate the objective of his journey.

The chief clerk glanced at the hat-rack, but, seeing the row complete, offered no remark. As soon as he was on the landing the man pulled a shepherd's plaid cap out of his pocket, put it on his head and ran quickly down the rickety stairs. From the street door he walked on furtively on the inner side of the path towards the corner and all at once dived into a doorway. He was now safe in the dark snug of O'Neill's shop, and filling up the little window that looked into the bar with his inflamed face, the colour of dark wine or dark meat, he called out:

"Here, Pat, give us a g.p.[2], like a good fellow."

The curate brought him a glass of plain porter. The man drank it at a gulp and asked for a caraway seed. He put his penny on the counter and, leaving the curate to grope for it in the gloom, retreated out of the snug as furtively as he had entered it.

Darkness, accompanied by a thick fog, was gaining upon the dusk of February and the lamps in Eustace Street had been lit. The man went up by the houses until he reached the door of the office, wondering whether he could finish his copy in time. On the stairs a moist pungent odour of perfumes saluted his nose: evidently Miss Delacour had come while he was out in O'Neill's. He crammed his cap back again into his pocket and re-entered the office, assuming an air of absent-mindedness.

"Mr. Alleyne has been calling for you," said the chief clerk severely. "Where were you?"

The man glanced at the two clients who were standing at the counter as if to intimate that their presence prevented him from answering. As the clients were both male the chief clerk allowed himself a laugh.

"I know that game," he said. "Five times in one day is a little bit . . . Well, you better look sharp and get a copy of our correspondence in the Delacour case for Mr. Alleyne."

This address in the presence of the public, his run upstairs and the porter he had gulped down so hastily confused the man and, as he sat down at his desk to get what was required, he realised how hopeless was the task of finishing his copy of the contract before half past five. The dark damp night was coming and he longed to spend it in the bars, drinking with his friends amid the glare of gas and the clatter of glasses. He got out the Delacour correspondence and passed out of the office. He hoped Mr. Alleyne would not discover that the last two letters were missing.

The moist pungent perfume lay all the way up to Mr. Alleyne's room. Miss Delacour was a middle-aged woman of Jewish appearance. Mr. Alleyne was said to be sweet on her or on her money. She came to the office often and stayed a long time when she came. She was sitting beside his desk now in an

2. A glass of porter.

aroma of perfumes, smoothing the handle of her umbrella and nodding the great black feather in her hat. Mr. Alleyne had swivelled his chair round to face her and thrown his right foot jauntily upon his left knee. The man put the correspondence on the desk and bowed respectfully but neither Mr. Alleyne nor Miss Delacour took any notice of his bow. Mr. Alleyne tapped a finger on the correspondence and then flicked it towards him as if to say: "*That's all right: you can go*."

The man returned to the lower office and sat down again at his desk. He stared intently at the incomplete phrase: *In no case shall the said Bernard Bodley be* . . . and thought how strange it was that the last three words began with the same letter. The chief clerk began to hurry Miss Parker, saying she would never have the letters typed in time for post. The man listened to the clicking of the machine for a few minutes and then set to work to finish his copy. But his head was not clear and his mind wandered away to the glare and rattle of the public-house. It was a night for hot punches. He struggled on with his copy, but when the clock struck five he had still fourteen pages to write. Blast it! He couldn't finish it in time. He longed to execrate aloud, to bring his fist down on something violently. He was so enraged that he wrote *Bernard Bernard* instead of *Bernard Bodley* and had to begin again on a clean sheet.

He felt strong enough to clear out the whole office single-handed. His body ached to do something, to rush out and revel in violence. All the indignities of his life enraged him. . . . Could he ask the cashier privately for an advance? No, the cashier was no good, no damn good: he wouldn't give an advance. . . . He knew where he would meet the boys: Leonard and O'Halloran and Nosey Flynn. The barometer of his emotional nature was set for a spell of riot.

His imagination had so abstracted him that his name was called twice before he answered. Mr. Alleyne and Miss Delacour were standing outside the counter and all the clerks had turn round in anticipation of something. The man got up from his desk. Mr. Alleyne began a tirade of abuse, saying that two letters were missing. The man answered that he knew nothing about them, that he had made a faithful copy. The tirade continued: it was so bitter and violent that the man could hardly restrain his fist from descending upon the head of the manikin[3] before him:

"I know nothing about any other two letters," he said stupidly.

"*You — know — nothing*. Of course you know nothing," said Mr. Alleyne. "Tell me," he added, glancing first for approval to the lady beside him, "do you take me for a fool? Do you think me an utter fool?"

The man glanced from the lady's face to the little egg-shaped head and back again; and, almost before he was aware of it, his tongue had found a felicitous moment:

"I don't think, sir," he said, "that that's a fair question to put to me."

There was a pause in the very breathing of the clerks. Everyone was astounded (the author of the witticism no less than his neighbours) and Miss Delacour, who was a stout amiable person, began to smile broadly. Mr. Alleyne flushed to the hue of a wild rose and his mouth twitched with a dwarf's passion. He shook his fist in the man's face till it seemed to vibrate like the knob of some electric machine:

"You impertinent ruffian! You impertinent ruffian! I'll make short work of you! Wait till you see! You'll apologise to me for your impertinence or you'll quit the office instanter! You'll quit this, I'm telling you, or you'll apologise to me!"

He stood in a doorway opposite the office watching to see if the cashier would come out alone. All the clerks passed out and finally the cashier came out with the chief clerk. It was no use trying to say a word to him when he was with the chief clerk. The man felt that his position was bad enough. He had been obliged to offer an abject apology to Mr. Alleyne for his impertinence but he knew what a hornet's nest the office would be for him. He could remember the way in which Mr. Alleyne had hounded little Peake

3. A little man.

out of the office in order to make room for his own nephew. He felt savage and thirsty and revengeful, annoyed with himself and with everyone else. Mr. Alleyne would never give him an hour's rest; his life would be a hell to him. He had made a proper fool of himself this time. Could he not keep his tongue in his cheek? But they had never pulled together from the first, he and Mr. Alleyne, ever since the day Mr. Alleyne had overheard him mimicking his North of Ireland accent to amuse Higgins and Miss Parker: that had been the beginning of it. He might have tried Higgins for the money, but sure Higgins never had anything for himself. A man with two establishments to keep up, of course he couldn't. . . .

He felt his great body again aching for the comfort of the public-house. The fog had begun to chill him and he wondered could he touch Pat in O'Neill's. He could not touch him for more than a bob[4] — and a bob was no use. Yet he must get money somewhere or other: he had spent his last penny for the g.p. and soon it would be too late for getting money anywhere. Suddenly, as he was fingering his watch-chain, he thought of Terry Kelly's pawn-office in Fleet Street. That was the dart! Why didn't he think of it sooner?

He went through the narrow alley of Temple Bar quickly, muttering to himself that they could all go to hell because he was going to have a good night of it. The clerk in Terry Kelly's said *A crown!* [5] but the consignor held out for six shillings; and in the end the six shillings was allowed him literally. He came out of the pawn-office joyfully, making a little cylinder, of the coins between his thumb and fingers. In Westmoreland Street the footpaths were crowded with young men and women returning from business and ragged urchins ran here and there yelling out the names of the evening editions. The man passed through the crowd, looking on the spectacle generally with proud satisfaction and staring masterfully at the office-girls. His head was full of the noises of tram-gongs and swishing trolleys and his nose already sniffed the curling fumes punch. As he walked on he preconsidered the terms in which he would narrate the incident to the boys:

"So, I just looked at him — coolly, you know, and looked at her. Then I looked back at him again — taking my time, you know. '*I don't think that that's a fair question to put to me,*' says I."

Nosey Flynn was sitting up in his usual corner of Davy Byrne's and, when he heard the story, he stood Farrington a half-one, saying it was as smart a thing as ever he heard. Farrington stood a drink in his turn. After a while O'Halloran and Paddy Leonard came in and the story was repeated to them. O'Halloran stood tailors of malt, hot, all round and told the story of the retort he had made to the chief clerk when he was in Callan's of Fownes's Street; but, as the retort was after the manner of the liberal shepherds in the eclogues[6], he had to admit that it was not as clever as Farrington's retort. At this Farrington told the boys to polish off that and have another.

Just as they were naming their poisons who should come in but Higgins! Of course he had to join in with the others. The men asked him to give his version of it, and he did so with great vivacity for the sight of five small hot whiskies was very exhilarating. Everyone roared laughing when he showed the way in which Mr. Alleyne shook his fist in Farrington's face. Then he imitated Farrington, saying, "*And here was my nabs, as cool as you please,*" while Farrington looked at the company out of his heavy dirty eyes, smiling and at times drawing forth stray drops of liquor from his moustache with the aid of his lower lip.

When that round was over there was a pause. O'Halloran had money but neither of the other two seemed to have any; so the whole party left the shop somewhat regretfully. At the corner of Duke Street Higgins and Nosey Flynn bevelled off to the left while the other three turned back towards the city. Rain was drizzling down on the cold streets and, when they reached the Ballast Office, Farrington suggested the Scotch House. The bar was full of men and loud with the noise of tongues and glasses. The three men

4. One shilling.

5. Five shillings.

6. A possible reference to the gross "liberal shepherds" in Hamlet 4.7.

pushed past the whining matchsellers at the door and formed a little party at the corner of the counter. They began to exchange stories. Leonard introduced them to a young fellow named Weathers who was performing at the Tivoli as an acrobat and knockabout *artiste*. Farrington stood a drink all round. Weathers said he would take a small Irish and Apollinaris[7]. Farrington, who had definite notions of what was what, asked the boys would they have an Apollinaris too; but the boys told Tim to make theirs hot. The talk became theatrical. O'Halloran stood a round and then Farrington stood another round, Weathers protesting that the hospitality was too Irish. He promised to get them in behind the scenes and introduce them to some nice girls. O'Halloran said that he and Leonard would go, but that Farrington wouldn't go because he was a married man; and Farrington's heavy dirty eyes leered at the company in token that he understood he was being chaffed. Weathers made them all have just one little tincture at his expense and promised to meet them later on at Mulligan's in Poolbeg Street.

When the Scotch House closed they went round to Mulligan's. They went into the parlour at the back and O'Halloran ordered small hot specials all round. They were all beginning to feel mellow. Farrington was just standing another round when Weathers came back. Much to Farrington's relief he drank a glass of bitter this time. Funds were getting low but they had enough to keep them going. Presently two young women with big hats and a young man in a check suit came in and sat at a table close by. Weathers saluted them and told the company that they were out of the Tivoli.[8] Farrington's eyes wandered at every moment in the direction of one of the young women. There was something striking in her appearance. An immense scarf of peacock-blue muslin was wound round her hat and knotted in a great bow under her chin; and she wore bright yellow gloves, reaching to the elbow. Farrington gazed admiringly at the plump arm which she moved very often and with much grace; and when, after a little time, she answered his gaze he admired still more her large dark brown eyes. The oblique staring expression in them fascinated him. She glanced at him once or twice and, when the party was leaving the room, she brushed against his chair and said "*O, pardon!*" in a London accent. He watched her leave the room in the hope that she would look back at him, but he was disappointed. He cursed his want of money and cursed all the rounds he had stood, particularly all the whiskies and Apollinaris which he had stood to Weathers. If there was one thing that he hated it was a sponge. He was so angry that he lost count of the conversation of his friends.

When Paddy Leonard called him he found that they were talking about feats of strength. Weathers was showing his biceps muscle to the company and boasting so much that the other two had called on Farrington to uphold the national honour. Farrington pulled up his sleeve accordingly and showed his biceps muscle to the company. The two arms were examined and compared and finally it was agreed to have a trial of strength. The table was cleared and the two men rested their elbows on it, clasping hands. When Paddy Leonard said "*Go!*" each was to try to bring down the other's hand on to the table. Farrington looked very serious and determined.

The trial began. After about thirty seconds Weathers brought his opponent's hand slowly down on to the table. Farrington's dark wine-coloured face flushed darker still with anger and humiliation at having been defeated by such a stripling.

"You're not to put the weight of your body behind it. Play fair," he said.

"Who's not playing fair?" said the other.

"Come on again. The two best out of three."

The trial began again. The veins stood out on Farrington's forehead, and the pallor of Weathers' complexion changed to peony. Their hands and arms trembled under the stress. After a long struggle Weathers again brought his opponent's hand slowly on to the table. There was a murmur of applause

7. A German mineral water.

8. A Dublin music-hall theatre.

from the spectators. The curate, who was standing beside the table, nodded his red head towards the victor and said with stupid familiarity:

"Ah! that's the knack!"

"What the hell do you know about it?" said Farrington fiercely, turning on the man. "What do you put in your gab for?"

"Sh, sh!" said O'Halloran, observing the violent expression of Farrington's face. "Pony up, boys. We'll have just one little smahan more and then we'll be off."

A very sullen-faced man stood at the corner of O'Connell Bridge waiting for the little Sandymount tram to take him home. He was full of smouldering anger and revengefulness. He felt humiliated and discontented; he did not even feel drunk; and he had only twopence in his pocket. He cursed everything. He had done for himself in the office, pawned his watch, spent all his money; and he had not even got drunk. He began to feel thirsty again and he longed to be back again in the hot reeking public-house. He had lost his reputation as a strong man, having been defeated twice by a mere boy. His heart swelled with fury and, when he thought of the woman in the big hat who had brushed against him and said *Pardon!* his fury nearly choked him.

His tram let him down at Shelbourne Road and he steered his great body along in the shadow of the wall of the barracks. He loathed returning to his home. When he went in by the side-door he found the kitchen empty and the kitchen fire nearly out. He bawled upstairs:

"Ada! Ada!"

His wife was a little sharp-faced woman who bullied her husband when he was sober and was bullied by him when he was drunk. They had five children. A little boy came running down the stairs.

"Who is that?" said the man, peering through the darkness.

"Me, pa."

"Who are you? Charlie?"

"No, pa. Tom."

"Where's your mother?"

"She's out at the chapel."

"That's right. . . . Did she think of leaving any dinner for me?"

"Yes, pa. I—"

"Light the lamp. What do you mean by having the place in darkness? Are the other children in bed?"

The man sat down heavily on one of the chairs while the little boy lit the lamp. He began to mimic his son's flat accent, saying half to himself: "*At the chapel. At the chapel, if you please!*" When the lamp was lit he banged his fist on the table and shouted:

"What's for my dinner?"

"I'm going . . . to cook it, pa," said the little boy.

The man jumped up furiously and pointed to the fire.

"On that fire! You let the fire out! By God, I'll teach you to do that again!"

He took a step to the door and seized the walking-stick which was standing behind it.

"I'll teach you to let the fire out!" he said, rolling up his sleeve in order to give his arm free play.

The little boy cried "*O, pa!*" and ran whimpering round the table, but the man followed him and caught him by the coat. The little boy looked about him wildly but, seeing no way of escape, fell upon his knees.

"Now, you'll let the fire out the next time!" said the man striking at him vigorously with the stick. "Take that, you little whelp!"

The boy uttered a squeal of pain as the stick cut his thigh. He clasped his hands together in the air and his voice shook with fright.

"O, pa!" he cried. "Don't beat me, pa! And I'll . . . I'll say a *Hail Mary* for you. . . . I'll say a *Hail Mary* for you, pa, if you don't beat me. . . . I'll say a *Hail Mary*. . . . "

162.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

Araby

1. What are some connotations of the word “Araby”?
2. Give a few examples of how the narrator distances himself from the boy he once was?
3. What is the main meaning of the word in the last sentence? In what sense was the protagonist “driven and derided by vanity”?
4. In a brief essay, discuss how religious imagery relates to the theme.
5. Discuss the motif of initiation or innocence to experience in the story.

Eveline

1. Describe Eveline’s home life.
2. How does she expect her new life to be different?
3. Is Buenos Aires a symbol?
4. List specific references to dust. What is the significance of the dust image?
5. What is Eveline’s father like? Compare him to Mansfield’s late colonel or to O’Casey’s Capt. Boyle.
6. What was her mother like? What happened to her? Does Eveline identify with her mother in any way?
7. What do you think her mother meant by her repeating “the end of pleasure is pain”?
8. What does her father mean when he tells her, “I know these sailor chaps”? What possible reasons would he have for trying to break up her romance with Frank?
9. What type of person is Frank? What does she actually know about him?
10. Has Eveline romanticized Frank in any way? Is her father’s objection of him perhaps justified?
11. What is Eveline’s duty to her father? What promise did she make to her dying mother?
12. What is her duty to herself? Does she really believe she has “a right to happiness”? Why or why not?

13. How does Eveline feel about leaving her brother, Harry?
14. In what ways is Eveline “like a helpless animal”? What is she afraid of?
15. Why do you think her eyes give Frank “no sign of love or farewell or recognition”?
16. Do you think Eveline made the right decision? Why or why not?
17. Read the notes on the musical allusion in the story.
18. In an essay of 1,000 to 1,500 words, give a feminist interpretation of the story.
19. Read the notes on the musical allusion in the story (The Lass Who Loves a Soldier), as well as the lyrics to the song; then discuss how it contributes to a contrast between Frank and Eveline’s father.

After the Race

1. Comment on the thematic significance of paragraph 1, “…this channel of poverty and inaction” and of “cheer of the gratefully oppressed.”
2. Describe Jimmy’s education. Why is his father secretly proud of his excesses?
3. Why is Jimmy taken with Ségouin?
4. In what is Jimmy about to invest? Does this seem to be a good investment? Why or why not?
5. How does Ségouin diffuse the heated discussion of politics? What does this say about him?
6. What meaning do you take from the following line, “he would lose, of course”?
7. What is Routh’s nationality and why is it significant to theme?

Counterparts

1. What is the narrative point of view in the story?
2. In the office scene, what is the narrator’s attitude toward Farrington? How does he refer to him? List some descriptions used.
3. Is there any difference between the descriptions and references to Farrington in the office scene and in the bar scenes?
4. Describe the atmosphere of the office.
5. Describe Mr. Alleyne.
6. Describe Farrington. What is his response after the arm-wrestling loss? What is his attitude to the chief clerk? The pub keeper (curate)?
7. The story breaks naturally into three main scenes. List them.
8. Describe the atmosphere of Farrington’s home.
9. Is Tom’s beating inevitable? That is, are you surprised when Farrington lashes out at him? If not, why not?
10. What is the significance of the title? Look up “counterpart” in a good dictionary.

11. Is it significant that Alleyne is from Northern Ireland, Weathers is from England, and the divided family is from Southern Ireland?
12. The protagonist Farrington beats his young son Tom (see last paragraph of story). Write a 600-word essay on what causes the beating. Try to find at least two or three major causes. If you decide that one of the causes of the beating is excessive alcohol consumption, be sure to make the logical link to violence. Otherwise you might commit a **post hoc, ergo propter hoc** fallacy, which occurs when the writer substitutes a mere correlation for the cause. An example: "Let's not invite Tom to our next picnic. Whenever he has attended our picnics, it has rained; whenever he was absent, it was sunny."
13. In an essay of 1,500 to 2,000 words, discuss "After the Race" and "Counterparts" as stories dealing with imperialism. Incidentally, the first chapter ("Telemachus") of Joyce's *Ulysses* also relates to the theme of colonialism: pay particular attention to Stephen's words to the English visitor Haines: "I am the servant of two masters…an English and an Italian." Identify these two masters and how they touch upon the colonialism topic. Also Joyce, in his portrait of the poor old milkwoman in the same chapter, alludes to Cathleen ni Houlihan, a traditional symbol of Ireland herself: she serves Mulligan and the Englishman Haines, "Her conqueror [Haines] and her gay betrayer[Mulligan]" Here is the link to the 1967 film, *Ulysses*, directed by Joseph Strick.

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?p=1175

Resources

Useful study questions for each story, as well as useful historical and related bibliography.

Two Podcasts on Joyce's "The Dead." the final story in *Dubliners*.

"Joyce's Dublin," a web talk by Irene Togher

An audio recording of "Araby"

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John McCormick "I'll Sing Thee Songs of Araby." Music by Frederick Clay; words by W.G. Wills

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This piece may very well have been the inspiration for Joyce's short story "Araby." Indeed, the story does refer to an actual fair that took place in Dublin in May 1894. But Joyce did know and utilize the song of the same name in *Finnegan's Wake*, and its lyrics completely fit the courtly love motif upon which the short story is based. At the end of the story, the adolescent protagonist finds himself in a darkened hall with all his dreams of Araby and Eastern enchantment dashed. [from CD liner notes, contributed by Prof. Zack Bowen]

Lyrics to the song

Eveline

A reading of Eveline.

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Ulysses.

Full-text in separate chapters.

Joseph Strick film version of *Ulysses* (1967)

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Prof. Michael Groden's "Notes on *Ulysses*": Chapter 1, "Telemachus"; Chapter 4 "Calypso"; and Chapter 18 "Penelope."

"Chapter 1 "Telemachus"

“Chapter 4 “Calypso”

“Chapter 18 “Penelope”

XXIV

D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930)

163.

Biography



Figure 1: D H Lawrence

David Herbert Lawrence, born on September 11, 1885 was an English novelist, poet, playwright, essayist, literary critic, and painter who published as D. H. Lawrence. His collected works, among other things, represent an extended reflection upon the dehumanising effects of modernity and industrialisation. In them, some of the issues Lawrence explores are emotional health, vitality, spontaneity, and instinct.

Lawrence's opinions earned him many enemies and he endured official persecution, censorship, and misrepresentation of his creative work throughout the second half of his life, much of which he spent in a voluntary exile, which he called his "savage pilgrimage."

At the time of his death, on March 2, 1930, his public reputation was that of a pornographer who had wasted his considerable talents. E. M. Forster, in an obituary notice, challenged this widely held

view, describing him as, "The greatest imaginative novelist of our generation." Later, the influential Cambridge critic F. R. Leavis championed both his artistic integrity and his moral seriousness, placing much of Lawrence's fiction within the canonical "great tradition" of the English novel.

From Wikipedia.

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164.

The Horse Dealer's Daughter

D.H. Lawrence

‘Well, Mabel, and what are you going to do with yourself?’ asked Joe, with foolish flippancy. He felt quite safe himself. Without listening for an answer, he turned aside, worked a grain of tobacco to the tip of his tongue, and spat it out. He did not care about anything, since he felt safe himself.

The three brothers and the sister sat round the desolate breakfast table, attempting some sort of desultory consultation. The morning’s post had given the final tap to the family fortunes, and all was over. The dreary dining-room itself, with its heavy mahogany furniture, looked as if it were waiting to be done away with.

But the consultation amounted to nothing. There was a strange air of ineffectuality about the three men, as they sprawled at table, smoking and reflecting vaguely on their own condition. The girl was alone, a rather short, sullen-looking young woman of twenty-seven. She did not share the same life as her brothers. She would have been good-looking, save for the impassive fixity of her face, ‘bull-dog’, as her brothers called it.

There was a confused tramping of horses’ feet outside. The three men all sprawled round in their chairs to watch. Beyond the dark holly-bushes that separated the strip of lawn from the highroad, they could see a cavalcade of shire horses swinging out of their own yard, being taken for exercise. This was the last time. These were the last horses that would go through their hands. The young men watched with critical, callous look. They were all frightened at the collapse of their lives, and the sense of disaster in which they were involved left them no inner freedom.

Yet they were three fine, well-set fellows enough. Joe, the eldest, was a man of thirty-three, broad and handsome in a hot, flushed way. His face was red, he twisted his black moustache over a thick finger, his eyes were shallow and restless. He had a sensual way of uncovering his teeth when he laughed, and his bearing was stupid. Now he watched the horses with a glazed look of helplessness in his eyes, a certain stupor of downfall.

The great draught-horses swung past. They were tied head to tail, four of them, and they heaved along to where a lane branched off from the highroad, planting their great hoofs floutingly in the fine black mud, swinging their great rounded haunches sumptuously, and trotting a few sudden steps as they were led into the lane, round the corner. Every movement showed a massive, slumbrous strength, and a stupidity which held them in subjection. The groom at the head looked back, jerking the leading rope. And the calvalcade moved out of sight up the lane, the tail of the last horse, bobbed up tight and stiff, held out taut from the swinging great haunches as they rocked behind the hedges in a motionlike sleep.

Joe watched with glazed hopeless eyes. The horses were almost like his own body to him. He felt he was done for now. Luckily he was engaged to a woman as old as himself, and therefore her father, who was steward of a neighbouring estate, would provide him with a job. He would marry and go into harness. His life was over, he would be a subject animal now.

He turned uneasily aside, the retreating steps of the horses echoing in his ears. Then, with foolish restlessness, he reached for the scraps of bacon-rind from the plates, and making a faint whistling sound,

flung them to the terrier that lay against the fender. He watched the dog swallow them, and waited till the creature looked into his eyes. Then a faint grin came on his face, and in a high, foolish voice he said:

'You won't get much more bacon, shall you, you little b——?'

The dog faintly and dismally wagged its tail, then lowered his haunches, circled round, and lay down again.

There was another helpless silence at the table. Joe sprawled uneasily in his seat, not willing to go till the family conclave was dissolved. Fred Henry, the second brother, was erect, clean-limbed, alert. He had watched the passing of the horses with more *sang-froid*.[1] If he was an animal, like Joe, he was an animal which controls, not one which is controlled.

He was master of any horse, and he carried himself with a well-tempered air of mastery. But he was not master of the situations of life. He pushed his coarse brown moustache upwards, off his lip, and glanced irritably at his sister, who sat impassive and inscrutable.

'You'll go and stop with Lucy for a bit, shan't you?' he asked. The girl did not answer.

'I don't see what else you can do,' persisted Fred Henry.

'Go as a skivvy,' Joe interpolated laconically.

The girl did not move a muscle.

'If I was her, I should go in for training for a nurse,' said Malcolm, the youngest of them all. He was the baby of the family, a young man of twenty-two, with a fresh, jaunty *museau*.[2]

But Mabel did not take any notice of him. They had talked at her and round her for so many years, that she hardly heard them at all.

The marble clock on the mantel-piece softly chimed the half-hour, the dog rose uneasily from the hearthrug and looked at the party at the breakfast table. But still they sat on in ineffectual conclave.

'Oh, all right,' said Joe suddenly, *à propos* of nothing. 'I'll get a move on.'

He pushed back his chair, straddled his knees with a downward jerk, to get them free, in horsy fashion, and went to the fire. Still he did not go out of the room; he was curious to know what the others would do or say. He began to charge his pipe, looking down at the dog and saying, in a high, affected voice:

'Going wi' me? Going wi' me are ter? Tha'rt goin' further than tha counts on just now, dost hear?'

The dog faintly wagged its tail, the man stuck out his jaw and covered his pipe with his hands, and puffed intently, losing himself in the tobacco, looking down all the while at the dog with an absent brown eye. The dog looked up at him in mournful distrust. Joe stood with his knees stuck out, in real horsy fashion.

'Have you had a letter from Lucy?' Fred Henry asked of his sister.

'Last week,' came the neutral reply.

'And what does she say?'

There was no answer.

'Does she *ask* you to go and stop there?' persisted Fred Henry.

'She says I can if I like.'

'Well, then, you'd better. Tell her you'll come on Monday.'

This was received in silence.

'That's what you'll do then, is it?' said Fred Henry, in some exasperation.

But she made no answer. There was a silence of futility and irritation in the room. Malcolm grinned fatuously.

'You'll have to make up your mind between now and next Wednesday,' said Joe loudly, 'or else find yourself lodgings on the kerbstone.'

1. Lit. "cold blood"; self-possession, imperturbability.
2. Colloquial term for face.

The face of the young woman darkened, but she sat on immutable.

'Here's Jack Fergusson!' exclaimed Malcolm, who was looking aimlessly out of the window.

'Where?' exclaimed Joe, loudly.

'Just gone past.'

'Coming in?'

Malcolm craned his neck to see the gate.

'Yes,' he said.

There was a silence. Mabel sat on like one condemned, at the head of the table. Then a whistle was heard from the kitchen. The dog got up and barked sharply. Joe opened the door and shouted:

'Come on.'

After a moment a young man entered. He was muffled up in overcoat and a purple woollen scarf, and his tweed cap, which he did not remove, was pulled down on his head. He was of medium height, his face was rather long and pale, his eyes looked tired.

'Hello, Jack! Well, Jack!' exclaimed Malcolm and Joe. Fred Henry merely said, 'Jack.'

'What's doing?' asked the newcomer, evidently addressing Fred Henry.

'Same. We've got to be out by Wednesday.—Got a cold?'

'I have—got it bad, too.'

'Why don't you stop in?'

'*Me* stop in? When I can't stand on my legs, perhaps I shall have a chance.' The young man spoke huskily. He had a slight Scotch accent.

'It's a knock-out, isn't it,' said Joe, boisterously, 'if a doctor goes round croaking with a cold. Looks bad for the patients, doesn't it?'

The young doctor looked at him slowly.

'Anything the matter with *you*, then?' he asked sarcastically.

'Not as I know of. Damn your eyes, I hope not. Why?'

'I thought you were very concerned about the patients, wondered if you might be one yourself.'

'Damn it, no, I've never been patient to no flaming doctor, and hope I never shall be,' returned Joe.

At this point Mabel rose from the table, and they all seemed to become aware of her existence. She began putting the dishes together. The young doctor looked at her, but did not address her. He had not greeted her. She went out of the room with the tray, her face impassive and unchanged.

'When are you off then, all of you?' asked the doctor.

'I'm catching the eleven-forty,' replied Malcolm. 'Are you goin' down wi'th' trap, Joe?'

'Yes, I've told you I'm going down wi' th' trap, haven't I?'

'We'd better be getting her in then.—So long, Jack, if I don't see you before I go,' said Malcolm, shaking hands.

He went out, followed by Joe, who seemed to have his tail between his legs.

'Well, this is the devil's own,' exclaimed the doctor, when he was left alone with Fred Henry. 'Going before Wednesday, are you?'

'That's the orders,' replied the other.

'Where, to Northampton?'

'That's it.'

'The devil!' exclaimed Fergusson, with quiet chagrin.

And there was silence between the two.

'All settled up, are you?' asked Fergusson.

'About.'

There was another pause.

'Well, I shall miss yer, Freddy, boy,' said the young doctor.

'And I shall miss thee, Jack,' returned the other.

'Miss you like hell,' mused the doctor.

Fred Henry turned aside. There was nothing to say. Mabel came in again, to finish clearing the table.

'What are *you* going to do, then, Miss Pervin?' asked Fergusson. 'Going to your sister's, are you?'

Mabel looked at him with her steady, dangerous eyes, that always made him uncomfortable, unsettling his superficial ease.

'No,' she said.

'Well, what in the name of fortune *are* you going to do? Say what you mean to do,' cried Fred Henry, with futile intensity.

But she only averted her head, and continued her work. She folded the white table-cloth, and put on the chenille cloth.

'The sulkiest bitch that ever trod!' muttered her brother.

But she finished her task with perfectly impassive face, the young doctor watching her interestedly all the while. Then she went out.

Fred Henry stared after her, clenching his lips, his blue eyes fixing in sharp antagonism, as he made a grimace of sour exasperation.

'You could bray her into bits, and that's all you'd get out of her,' he said, in a small, narrowed tone.

The doctor smiled faintly.

'What's she *going* to do, then?' he asked.

'Strike me if I know!' returned the other.

There was a pause. Then the doctor stirred.

'I'll be seeing you tonight, shall I?' he said to his friend.

'Ay—where's it to be? Are we going over to Jessdale?'

'I don't know. I've got such a cold on me. I'll come round to the Moon and Stars, anyway.'

'Let Lizzie and May miss their night for once, eh?'

'That's it—if I feel as I do now.'

'All's one—'

The two young men went through the passage and down to the back door together. The house was large, but it was servantless now, and desolate.

At the back was a small bricked house-yard, and beyond that a big square, gravelled fine and red, and having stables on two sides. Sloping, dank, winter-dark fields stretched away on the open sides.

But the stables were empty. Joseph Pervin, the father of the family, had been a man of no education, who had become a fairly large horse dealer. The stables had been full of horses, there was a great turmoil and come-and-go of horses and of dealers and grooms. Then the kitchen was full of servants. But of late things had declined. The old man had married a second time, to retrieve his fortunes. Now he was dead and everything was gone to the dogs, there was nothing but debt and threatening.

For months, Mabel had been servantless in the big house, keeping the home together in penury for her ineffectual brothers. She had kept house for ten years. But previously, it was with unstinted means. Then, however brutal and coarse everything was, the sense of money had kept her proud, confident. The men might be foul-mouthed, the women in the kitchen might have bad reputations, her brothers might have illegitimate children. But so long as there was money, the girl felt herself established, and brutally proud, reserved.

No company came to the house, save dealers and coarse men. Mabel had no associates of her own sex, after her sister went away. But she did not mind. She went regularly to church, she attended to her father. And she lived in the memory of her mother, who had died when she was fourteen, and whom she had loved. She had loved her father, too, in a different way, depending upon him, and feeling secure in

him, until at the age of fifty-four he married again. And then she had set hard against him. Now he had died and left them all hopelessly in debt.

She had suffered badly during the period of poverty. Nothing, however, could shake the curious sullen, animal pride that dominated each member of the family. Now, for Mabel, the end had come. Still she would not cast about her. She would follow her own way just the same. She would always hold the keys of her own situation. Mindless and persistent, she endured from day to day. Why should she think? Why should she answer anybody? It was enough that this was the end, and there was no way out. She need not pass any more darkly along the main street of the small town, avoiding every eye. She need not demean herself any more, going into the shops and buying the cheapest food. This was at an end. She thought of nobody, not even of herself. Mindless and persistent, she seemed in a sort of ecstasy to be coming nearer to her fulfilment, her own glorification, approaching her dead mother, who was glorified.

In the afternoon she took a little bag, with shears and sponge and a small scrubbing brush, and went out. It was a grey, wintry day, with saddened, dark-green fields and an atmosphere blackened by the smoke of foundries not far off. She went quickly, darkly along the causeway, heeding nobody, through the town to the churchyard.

There she always felt secure, as if no one could see her, although as a matter of fact she was exposed to the stare of everyone who passed along under the churchyard wall. Nevertheless, once under the shadow of the great looming church, among the graves, she felt immune from the world, reserved within the thick churchyard wall as in another country.

Carefully she clipped the grass from the grave, and arranged the pinky-white, small chrysanthemums in the tin cross. When this was done, she took an empty jar from a neighbouring grave, brought water, and carefully, most scrupulously sponged the marble headstone and the coping-stone.

It gave her sincere satisfaction to do this. She felt in immediate contact with the world of her mother. She took minute pains, went through the park in a state bordering on pure happiness, as if in performing this task she came into a subtle, intimate connexion with her mother. For the life she followed here in the world was far less real than the world of death she inherited from her mother.

The doctor’s house was just by the church. Fergusson, being a mere hired assistant, was slave to the countryside. As he hurried now to attend to the outpatients in the surgery, glancing across the graveyard with his quick eye, he saw the girl at her task at the grave. She seemed so intent and remote, it was like looking into another world. Some mystical element was touched in him. He slowed down as he walked, watching her as if spell-bound.

She lifted her eyes, feeling him looking. Their eyes met. And each looked again at once, each feeling, in some way, found out by the other. He lifted his cap and passed on down the road. There remained distinct in his consciousness, like a vision, the memory of her face, lifted from the tombstone in the churchyard, and looking at him with slow, large, portentous eyes. It *was* portentous, her face. It seemed to mesmerize him. There was a heavy power in her eyes which laid hold of his whole being, as if he had drunk some powerful drug. He had been feeling weak and done before. Now the life came back into him, he felt delivered from his own fretted, daily self.

He finished his duties at the surgery as quickly as might be, hastily filling up the bottles of the waiting people with cheap drugs. Then, in perpetual haste, he set off again to visit several cases in another part of his round, before teatime. At all times he preferred to walk, if he could, but particularly when he was not well. He fancied the motion restored him.

The afternoon was falling. It was grey, deadened, and wintry, with a slow, moist, heavy coldness sinking in and deadening all the faculties. But why should he think or notice? He hastily climbed the hill and turned across the dark-green fields, following the black cinder-track. In the distance, across a shallow dip in the country, the small town was clustered like smouldering ash, a tower, a spire, a heap of low, raw, extinct houses. And on the nearest fringe of the town, sloping into the dip, was Oldmeadow,

the Pervins' house. He could see the stables and the outbuildings distinctly, as they lay towards him on the slope. Well, he would not go there many more times! Another resource would be lost to him, another place gone: the only company he cared for in the alien, ugly little town he was losing. Nothing but work, drudgery, constant hastening from dwelling to dwelling among the colliers and the iron-workers. It wore him out, but at the same time he had a craving for it. It was a stimulant to him to be in the homes of the working people, moving as it were through the innermost body of their life. His nerves were excited and gratified. He could come so near, into the very lives of the rough, inarticulate, powerfully emotional men and women. He grumbled, he said he hated the hellish hole. But as a matter of fact it excited him, the contact with the rough, strongly-feeling people was a stimulant applied direct to his nerves.

Below Oldmeadow, in the green, shallow, soddened hollow of fields, lay a square, deep pond. Roving across the landscape, the doctor's quick eye detected a figure in black passing through the gate of the field, down towards the pond. He looked again. It would be Mabel Pervin. His mind suddenly became alive and attentive.

Why was she going down there? He pulled up on the path on the slope above, and stood staring. He could just make sure of the small black figure moving in the hollow of the failing day. He seemed to see her in the midst of such obscurity, that he was like a clairvoyant, seein rather with the mind's eye than with ordinary sight. Yet he could see her positively enough, whilst he kept his eye attentive. He felt, if he looked away from her, in the thick, ugly falling dusk, he would lose her altogether.

He followed her minutely as she moved, direct and intent, like something transmitted rather than stirring in voluntary activity, straight down the field towards the pond. There she stood on the bank for a moment. She never raised her head. Then she waded slowly into the water.

He stood motionless as the small black figure walked slowly and deliberately towards the centre of the pond, very slowly, gradually moving deeper into the motionless water, and still moving forward as the water got up to her breast. Then he could see her no more in the dusk of the dead afternoon.

'There!' he exclaimed. 'Would you believe it?'

And he hastened straight down, running over the wet, soddened fields, pushing through the hedges, down into the depression of callous wintry obscurity. It took him several minutes to come to the pond. He stood on the bank, breathing heavily. He could see nothing. His eyes seemed to penetrate the dead water. Yes, perhaps that was the dark shadow of her black clothing beneath the surface of the water.

He slowly ventured into the pond. The bottom was deep, soft clay, he sank in, and the water clasped dead cold round his legs. As he stirred he could smell the cold, rotten clay that fouled up into the water. It was objectionable in his lungs. Still, repelled and yet not heeding, he moved deeper into the pond. The cold water rose over his thighs, over his loins, upon his abdomen. The lower part of his body was all sunk in the hideous cold element. And the bottom was so deeply soft and uncertain, he was afraid of pitching with his mouth underneath. He could not swim, and was afraid.

He crouched a little, spreading his hands under the water and moving them round, trying to feel for her. The dead cold pond swayed upon his chest. He moved again, a little deeper, and again, with his hands underneath, he felt all around under the water. And he touched her clothing. But it evaded his fingers. He made a desperate effort to grasp it.

And so doing he lost his balance and went under, horribly, suffocating in the foul earthy water, struggling madly for a few moments. At last, after what seemed an eternity, he got his footing, rose again into the air and looked around. He gasped, and knew he was in the world. Then he looked at the water. She had risen near him. He grasped her clothing, and drawing her nearer, turned to take his way to land again.

He went very slowly, carefully, absorbed in the slow progress. He rose higher, climbing out of the pond. The water was now only about his legs; he was thankful, full of relief to be out of the clutches of the pond. He lifted her and staggered on to the bank, out of the horror of wet, grey clay.

He laid her down on the bank. She was quite unconscious and running with water. He made the water come from her mouth, he worked to restore her. He did not have to work very long before he could feel the breathing begin again in her; she was breathing naturally. He worked a little longer. He could feel her live beneath his hands; she was coming back. He wiped her face, wrapped her in his overcoat, looked round into the dim, dark-grey world, then lifted her and staggered down the bank and across the fields.

It seemed an unthinkably long way, and his burden so heavy he felt he would never get to the house. But at last he was in the stable-yard, and then in the house-yard. He opened the door and went into the house. In the kitchen he laid her down on the hearthrug, and called. The house was empty. But the fire was burning in the grate.

Then again he kneeled to attend to her. She was breathing regularly, her eyes were wide open and as if conscious, but there seemed something missing in her look. She was conscious in herself, but unconscious of her surroundings.

He ran upstairs, took blankets from a bed, and put them before the fire to warm. Then he removed her saturated, earthy-smelling clothing, rubbed her dry with a towel, and wrapped her naked in the blankets. Then he went into the dining-room, to look for spirits. There was a little whisky. He drank a gulp himself, and put some into her mouth.

The effect was instantaneous. She looked full into his face, as if she had been seeing him for some time, and yet had only just become conscious of him.

'Dr. Fergusson?' she said.

'What?' he answered.

He was divesting himself of his coat, intending to find some dry clothing upstairs. He could not bear the smell of the dead, clayey water, and he was mortally afraid for his own health.

'What did I do?' she asked.

'Walked into the pond,' he replied. He had begun to shudder like one sick, and could hardly attend to her. Her eyes remained full on him, he seemed to be going dark in his mind, looking back at her helplessly. The shuddering became quieter in him, his life came back in him, dark and unknowing, but strong again.

'Was I out of my mind?' she asked, while her eyes were fixed on him all the time.

'Maybe, for the moment,' he replied. He felt quiet, because his strength had come back. The strange fretful strain had left him.

'Am I out of my mind now?' she asked.

'Are you?' he reflected a moment. 'No,' he answered truthfully, 'I don't see that you are.' He turned his face aside. He was afraid now, because he felt dazed, and felt dimly that her power was stronger than his, in this issue. And she continued to look at him fixedly all the time. 'Can you tell me where I shall find some dry things to put on?' he asked.

'Did you dive into the pond for me?' she asked.

'No,' he answered. 'I walked in. But I went in overhead as well.'

There was silence for a moment. He hesitated. He very much wanted to go upstairs to get into dry clothing. But there was another desire in him. And she seemed to hold him. His will seemed to have gone to sleep, and left him, standing there slack before her. But he felt warm inside himself. He did not shudder at all, though his clothes were sodden on him.

'Why did you?' she asked.

'Because I didn't want you to do such a foolish thing,' he said.

'It wasn't foolish,' she said, still gazing at him as she lay on the floor, with a sofa cushion under her head. 'It was the right thing to do. *I* knew best, then.'

'I'll go and shift these wet things,' he said. But still he had not the power to move out of her presence,

until she sent him. It was as if she had the life of his body in her hands, and he could not extricate himself. Or perhaps he did not want to.

Suddenly she sat up. Then she became aware of her own immediate condition. She felt the blankets about her, she knew her own limbs. For a moment it seemed as if her reason were going. She looked round, with wild eye, as if seeking something. He stood still with fear. She saw her clothing lying scattered.

'Who undressed me?' she asked, her eyes resting full and inevitable on his face.

'I did,' he replied, 'to bring you round.'

For some moments she sat and gazed at him awfully, her lips parted.

'Do you love me then?' she asked.

He only stood and stared at her, fascinated. His soul seemed to melt.

She shuffled forward on her knees, and put her arms round him, round his legs, as he stood there, pressing her breasts against his knees and thighs, clutching him with strange, convulsive certainty, pressing his thighs against her, drawing him to her face, her throat, as she looked up at him with flaring, humble eyes, of transfiguration, triumphant in first possession.

'You love me,' she murmured, in strange transport, yearning and triumphant and confident. 'You love me. I know you love me, I know.'

And she was passionately kissing his knees, through the wet clothing, passionately and indiscriminately kissing his knees, his legs, as if unaware of every thing.

He looked down at the tangled wet hair, the wild, bare, animal shoulders. He was amazed, bewildered, and afraid. He had never thought of loving her. He had never wanted to love her. When he rescued her and restored her, he was a doctor, and she was a patient. He had had no single personal thought of her. Nay, this introduction of the personal element was very distasteful to him, a violation of his professional honour. It was horrible to have her there embracing his knees. It was horrible. He revolted from it, violently. And yet—and yet—he had not the power to break away.

She looked at him again, with the same supplication of powerful love, and that same transcendent, frightening light of triumph. In view of the delicate flame which seemed to come from her face like a light, he was powerless. And yet he had never intended to love her. He had never intended. And something stubborn in him could not give way.

'You love me,' she repeated, in a murmur of deep, rhapsodic assurance.

'You love me.'

Her hands were drawing him, drawing him down to her. He was afraid, even a little horrified. For he had, really, no intention of loving her. Yet her hands were drawing him towards her. He put out his hand quickly to steady himself, and grasped her bare shoulder. A flame seemed to burn the hand that grasped her soft shoulder. He had no intention of loving her: his whole will was against his yielding. It was horrible. And yet wonderful was the touch of her shoulders, beautiful the shining of her face. Was she perhaps mad? He had a horror of yielding to her. Yet something in him ached also.

He had been staring away at the door, away from her. But his hand remained on her shoulder. She had gone suddenly very still. He looked down at her. Her eyes were now wide with fear, with doubt, the light was dying from her face, a shadow of terrible greyness was returning. He could not bear the touch of her eyes' question upon him, and the look of death behind the question.

With an inward groan he gave way, and let his heart yield towards her. A sudden gentle smile came on his face. And her eyes, which never left his face, slowly, slowly filled with tears. He watched the strange water rise in her eyes, like some slow fountain coming up. And his heart seemed to burn and melt away in his breast.

He could not bear to look at her any more. He dropped on his knees and caught her head with his arms and pressed her face against his throat. She was very still. His heart, which seemed to have broken, was

burning with a kind of agony in his breast. And he felt her slow, hot tears wetting his throat. But he could not move.

He felt the hot tears wet his neck and the hollows of his neck, and he remained motionless, suspended through one of man's eternities. Only now it had become indispensable to him to have her face pressed close to him; he could never let her go again. He could never let her head go away from the close clutch of his arm. He wanted to remain like that for ever, withhis heart hurting him in a pain that was also life to him. Without knowing, he was looking down on her damp, soft brown hair.

Then, as it were suddenly, he smelt the horrid stagnant smell of that water. And at the same moment she drew away from him and looked at him. Her eyes were wistful and unfathomable. He was afraid of them, and he fell to kissing her, not knowing what he was doing. He wanted her eyes not to have that terrible, wistful, unfathomable look.

When she turned her face to him again, a faint delicate flush was glowing, and there was again dawning that terrible shining of joy in her eyes, which really terrified him, and yet which he now wanted to see, because he feared the look of doubt still more.

'You love me?' she said, rather faltering.

'Yes.' The word cost him a painful effort. Not because it wasn't true. But because it was too newly true, the *saying* seemed to tear open again his newly-torn heart. And he hardly wanted it to be true, even now.

She lifted her face to him, and he bent forward and kissed her on the mouth, gently, with the one kiss that is an eternal pledge. And as he kissed her his heart strained again in his breast. He never intended to love her. But now it was over. He had crossed over the gulf to her, and all that he had left behind had shrivelled and become void.

After the kiss, her eyes again slowly filled with tears. She sat still, away from him, with her face drooped aside, and her hands folded in her lap. The tears fell very slowly. There was complete silence. He too sat there motionless and silent on the hearthrug. The strange pain of his heart that was broken seemed to consume him. That he should love her? That this was love! That he should be ripped open in this way!—Him, a doctor!—How they would all jeer if they knew!—It was agony to him to think they might know.

In the curious naked pain of the thought he looked again to her. She was sitting there drooped into a muse. He saw a tear fall, and his heart flared hot. He saw for the first time that one of her shoulders was quite uncovered, one arm bare, he could see one of her small breasts; dimly, because it had become almost dark in the room.

'Why are you crying?' he asked, in an altered voice.

She looked up at him, and behind her tears the consciousness of her situation for the first time brought a dark look of shame to her eyes.

'I'm not crying, really,' she said, watching him half frightened.

He reached his hand, and softly closed it on her bare arm.

'I love you! I love you!' he said in a soft, low vibrating voice, unlike himself.

She shrank, and dropped her head. The soft, penetrating grip of his hand on her arm distressed her. She looked up at him.

'I want to go,' she said. 'I want to go and get you some dry things.'

'Why?' he said. 'I'm all right.'

'But I want to go,' she said. 'And I want you to change your things.'

He released her arm, and she wrapped herself in the blanket, looking at him rather frightened. And still she did not rise.

'Kiss me,' she said wistfully.

He kissed her, but briefly, half in anger.

Then, after a second, she rose nervously, all mixed up in the blanket. He watched her in her confusion, as she tried to extricate herself and wrap herself up so that she could walk. He watched her relentlessly, as she knew. And as she went, the blanket trailing, and as he saw a glimpse of her feet and her white leg, he tried to remember her as she was when he had wrapped her in the blanket. But then he didn't want to remember, because she had been nothing to him then, and his nature revolted from remembering her as she was when she was nothing to him.

A tumbling, muffled noise from within the dark house startled him. Then he heard her voice: 'There are clothes.' He rose and went to the foot of the stairs, and gathered up the garments she had thrown down. Then he came back to the fire, to rub himself down and dress. He grinned at his own appearance when he had finished.

The fire was sinking, so he put on coal. The house was now quite dark, save for the light of a street-lamp that shone in faintly from beyond the holly trees. He lit the gas with matches he found on the mantel-piece. Then he emptied the pockets of his own clothes, and threw all his wet things in a heap into the scullery. After which he gathered up her sodden clothes, gently, and put them in a separate heap on the copper-top in the scullery.

It was six o'clock on the clock. His own watch had stopped. He ought to go back to the surgery. He waited, and still she did not come down. So he went to the foot of the stairs and called:

'I shall have to go.'

Almost immediately he heard her coming down. She had on her best dress of black voile, and her hair was tidy, but still damp. She looked at him—and in spite of herself, smiled.

'I don't like you in those clothes,' she said.

'Do I look a sight?' he answered.

They were shy of one another.

'I'll make you some tea,' she said.

'No, I must go.'

'Must you?' And she looked at him again with the wide, strained, doubtful eyes. And again, from the pain of his breast, he knew how he loved her. He went and bent to kiss her, gently, passionately, with his heart's painful kiss.

'And my hair smells so horrible,' she murmured in distraction. 'And I'm so awful, I'm so awful! Oh, no, I'm too awful.' And she broke into bitter, heart-broken sobbing. 'You can't want to love me, I'm horrible.'

'Don't be silly, don't be silly,' he said, trying to comfort her, kissing her, holding her in his arms. 'I want you, I want to marry you, we're going to be married, quickly, quickly—to-morrow if I can.'

But she only sobbed terribly, and cried:

'I feel awful. I feel awful. I feel I'm horrible to you.

'No, I want you, I want you,' was all he answered, blindly, with that terrible intonation which frightened her almost more than her horror lest he should *not* want her

165.

The Rocking Horse Winner

D.H. Lawrence

There was a woman who was beautiful, who started with all the advantages, yet she had no luck. She married for love, and the love turned to dust. She had bonny children, yet she felt they had been thrust upon her, and she could not love them. They looked at her coldly, as if they were finding fault with her. And hurriedly she felt she must cover up some fault in herself. Yet what it was that she must cover up she never knew. Nevertheless, when her children were present, she always felt the centre of her heart go hard. This troubled her, and in her manner she was all the more gentle and anxious for her children, as if she loved them very much. Only she herself knew that at the centre of her heart was a hard little place that could not feel love, no, not for anybody. Everybody else said of her: "She is such a good mother. She adores her children." Only she herself, and her children themselves, knew it was not so. They read it in each other's eyes.There were a boy and two little girls. They lived in a pleasant house, with a garden, and they had discreet servants, and felt themselves superior to anyone in the neighbourhood.Although they lived in style, they felt always an anxiety in the house. There was never enough money. The mother had a small income, and the father had a small income, but not nearly enough for the social position which they had to keep up. The father went in to town to some office. But though he had good prospects, these prospects never materialised. There was always the grinding sense of the shortage of money, though the style was always kept up.At last the mother said, "I will see if *I* can't make something." But she did not know where to begin. She racked her brains, and tried this thing and the other, but could not find anything successful. The failure made deep lines come into her face. Her children were growing up, they would have to go to school. There must be more money, there must be more money. The father, who was always very handsome and expensive in his tastes, seemed as if he never *would* be able to do anything worth doing. And the mother, who had a great belief in herself, did not succeed any better, and her tastes were just as expensive.And so the house came to be haunted by the unspoken phrase: *There must be more money! There must be more money!* The children could hear it all the time, though nobody said it aloud. They heard it at Christmas, when the expensive and splendid toys filled the nursery. Behind the shining modern rocking-horse, behind the smart doll's-house, a voice would start whispering: "There *must* be more money! There *must* be more money!" And the children would stop playing, to listen for a moment. They would look into each other's eyes, to see if they had all heard. And each one saw in the eyes of the other two that they too had heard. "There *must* be more money! There *must* be more money!"It came whispering from the springs of the still-swaying rocking-horse, and even the horse, bending his wooden, champing head, heard it. The big doll, sitting so pink and smirking in her new pram, could hear it quite plainly, and seemed to be smirking all the more self-consciously because of it. The foolish puppy, too, that took the place of the teddy-bear, he was looking so extraordinarily foolish for no other reason but that he heard the secret whisper all over the house: "There *must* be more money."

Yet nobody ever said it aloud. The whisper was everywhere, and therefore no one spoke it. Just as no one ever says: "We are breathing!" in spite of the fact that breath is coming and going all the time.

"Mother!" said the boy Paul one day. "Why don't we keep a car of our own? Why do we always use uncle's, or else a taxi?"

"Because we're the poor members of the family," said the mother.

"But why *are* we, mother?"

"Well—I suppose," she said slowly and bitterly, "it's because your father has no luck."

The boy was silent for some time.

"Is luck money, mother?" he asked, rather timidly.

"No, Paul! Not quite. It's what causes you to have money."

"Oh!" said Paul vaguely. "I thought when Uncle Oscar said *filthy lucker,* it meant money."

"*Filthy lucre* does mean money," said the mother. "But it's lucre, not luck."

"Oh!" said the boy. "Then what *is* luck, mother?"

"It's what causes you to have money. If you're lucky you have money. That's why it's better to be born lucky than rich. If you're rich, you may lose your money. But if you're lucky, you will always get more money."

"Oh! Will you! And is father not lucky?"

"Very unlucky, I should say," she said bitterly.

The boy watched her with unsure eyes.

"Why?" he asked.

"I don't know. Nobody ever knows why one person is lucky and another unlucky."

"Don't they? Nobody at all? Does *nobody* know?"

"Perhaps God! But He never tells."

"He ought to, then. And aren't you lucky either, mother?"

"I can't be, if I married an unlucky husband."

"But by yourself, aren't you?"

"I used to think I was, before I married. Now I think I am very unlucky indeed."

"Why?"

"Well—never mind! Perhaps I'm not really," she said.

The child looked at her, to see if she meant it. But he saw, by the lines of her mouth, that she was only trying to hide something from him.

"Well, anyhow," he said stoutly, "I'm a lucky person."

"Why?" said his mother, with a sudden laugh.

He stared at her. He didn't even know why he had said it.

"God told me," he asserted, brazening it out.

"I hope He did, dear!" she said, again with a laugh, but rather bitter.

"He did, mother!"

"Excellent!" said the mother, using one of her husband's exclamations.

The boy saw she did not believe him; or rather, that she paid no attention to his assertion. This angered him somewhere, and made him want to compel her attention.

He went off by himself, vaguely, in a childish way, seeking for the clue to "luck". Absorbed, taking no heed of other people, he went about with a sort of stealth, seeking inwardly for luck. He wanted luck, he wanted it, he wanted it. When the two girls were playing dolls, in the nursery, he would sit on his big rocking-horse, charging madly into space, with a frenzy that made the little girls peer at him uneasily. Wildly the horse careered, the waving dark hair of the boy tossed, his eyes had a strange glare in them. The little girls dared not speak to him.

When he had ridden to the end of his mad little journey, he climbed down and stood in front of his rocking-horse, staring fixedly into its lowered face. Its red mouth was slightly open, its big eye was wide and glassy bright.

"Now!" he would silently command the snorting steed. "Now take me to where there is luck! Now take me!"

And he would slash the horse on the neck with the little whip he had asked Uncle Oscar for. He *knew* the horse could take him to where there was luck, if only he forced it. So he would mount again, and start on his furious ride, hoping at last to get there. He knew he could get there.

"You'll break your horse, Paul!" said the nurse.

"He's always riding like that! I wish he'd leave off!" said his elder sister Joan.

But he only glared down on them in silence. Nurse gave him up. She could make nothing of him. Anyhow he was growing beyond her.

One day his mother and his Uncle Oscar came in when he was on one of his furious rides. He did not speak to them.

"Hallo! you young jockey! Riding a winner?" said his uncle.

"Aren't you growing too big for a rocking-horse? You're not a very little boy any longer, you know," said his mother.

But Paul only gave a blue glare from his big, rather close-set eyes. He would speak to nobody when he was in full tilt. His mother watched him with an anxious expression on her face.

At last he suddenly stopped forcing his horse into the mechanical gallop, and slid down.

"Well, I got there!" he announced fiercely, his blue eyes still flaring, and his sturdy long legs straddling apart.

"Where did you get to?" asked his mother.

"Where I wanted to go to," he flared back at her.

"That's right, son!" said Uncle Oscar. "Don't you stop till you get there. What's the horse's name?"

"He doesn't have a name," said the boy.

"Gets on without all right?" asked the uncle.

"Well, he has different names. He was called Sansovino last week."

"Sansovino, eh? Won the Ascot[1]. How did you know his name?"

"He always talks about horse-races with Bassett," said Joan.

The uncle was delighted to find that his small nephew was posted with all the racing news. Bassett, the young gardener who had been wounded in the left foot in the war, and had got his present job through Oscar Cresswell, whose batman[2] he had been, was a perfect blade of the "turf". He lived in the racing events, and the small boy lived with him.

Oscar Cresswell got it all from Bassett.

"Master Paul comes and asks me, so I can't do more than tell him, sir," said Bassett, his face terribly serious, as if he were speaking of religious matters.

"And does he ever put anything on a horse he fancies?"

"Well—I don't want to give him away—he's a young sport, a fine sport, sir. Would you mind asking him himself? He sort of takes a pleasure in it, and perhaps he'd feel I was giving him away, sir, if you don't mind."

Bassett was serious as a church.

The uncle went back to his nephew, and took him off for a ride in the car.

"Say, Paul, old man, do you ever put anything on a horse?" the uncle asked.

The boy watched the handsome man closely.

"Why, do you think I oughtn't to?" he parried.

"Not a bit of it! I thought perhaps you might give me a tip for the Lincoln[3]."

1. Sansovino won the Prince of Wales' Stakes at Ascot in 1924 two weeks after winning the Derby at Epsom Downs.
2. Servant of a cavalry officer.
3. Lincoln Handicap, run at Lincoln Racecourse in Lincolnshire. The racecourse closed in 1965.

The car sped on into the country, going down to Uncle Oscar's place in Hampshire.

"Honour bright?" said the nephew.

"Honour bright, son!" said the uncle.

"Well, then, Daffodil."[4]

"Daffodil! I doubt it, sonny. What about Mirza?"

"I only know the winner," said the boy. "That's Daffodil!"

"Daffodil, eh?" There was a pause. Daffodil was an obscure horse comparatively.

"Uncle!"

"Yes, son?"

"You won't let it go any further, will you? I promised Bassett."

"Bassett be damned, old man! What's he got to do with it?"

"We're partners! We've been partners from the first! Uncle, he lent me my first five shillings, which I lost. I promised him, honour bright, it was only between me and him: only you gave me that ten-shilling note I started winning with, so I thought you were lucky. You won't let it go any further, will you?"

The boy gazed at his uncle from those big, hot, blue eyes, set rather close together. The uncle stirred and laughed uneasily.

"Right you are, son! I'll keep your tip private. Daffodil, eh! How much are you putting on him?"

"All except twenty pounds," said the boy. "I keep that in reserve."

The uncle thought it a good joke.

"You keep twenty pounds in reserve, do you, you young romancer? What are you betting, then?"

"I'm betting three hundred," said the boy gravely. "But it's between you and me, Uncle Oscar! Honour bright?"

The uncle burst into a roar of laughter.

"It's between you and me all right, you young Nat Gould,"[5] he said, laughing. "But where's your three hundred?"

"Bassett keeps it for me. We're partners."

"You are, are you! And what is Bassett putting on Daffodil?"

"He won't go quite as high as I do, I expect. Perhaps he'll go a hundred and fifty."

"What, pennies?" laughed the uncle.

"Pounds," said the child, with a surprised look at his uncle. "Bassett keeps a bigger reserve than I do."

Between wonder and amusement, Uncle Oscar was silent. He pursued the matter no further, but he determined to take his nephew with him to the Lincoln races.

"Now, son," he said, "I'm putting twenty on Mirza, and I'll put five for you on any horse you fancy. What's your pick?"

"Daffodil, uncle!"

"No, not the fiver on Daffodil!"

"I should if it was my own fiver," said the child.

"Good! Good! Right you are! A fiver for me and a fiver for you on Daffodil."

The child had never been to a race-meeting before, and his eyes were blue fire. He pursed his mouth tight, and watched. A Frenchman just in front had put his money on Lancelot. Wild with excitement, he flayed his arms up and down, yelling '*Lancelot! Lancelot/*' in his French accent.

Daffodil came in first, Lancelot second, Mirza third. The child, flushed and with eyes blazing, was curiously serene. His uncle brought him five five-pound notes: four to one.

"What am I to do with these?" he cried, waving them before the boy's eyes.

4. Both Daffodil and Mirz were racehorses; the former ran unsuccessfully in six races 1924-25. Mirza won three races in 1919.

5. Nat Gould (1857-1919). Anglo-Australian horse-racing journalist , tipster and prolific writer, specializing in sporting novels.

"I suppose we'll talk to Bassett," said the boy. "I expect I have fifteen hundred now: and twenty in reserve: and this twenty."

His uncle studied him for some moments.

"Look here, son!" he said. "You're not serious about Bassett and that fifteen hundred, are you?"

"Yes, I am. But it's between you and me, uncle! Honour bright!"

"Honour bright all right, son! But I must talk to Bassett."

"If you'd like to be a partner, uncle, with Bassett and me, we could all be partners. Only you'd have to promise, honour bright, uncle, not to let it go beyond us three. Bassett and I are lucky, and you must be lucky, because it was your ten shillings I started winning with . . ."

Uncle Oscar took both Bassett and Paul into Richmond Park[6] for an afternoon, and there they talked.

"It's like this, you see, sir," Bassett said. "Master Paul would get me talking about racing events, spinning yarns, you know, sir. And he was always keen on knowing if I'd made or if I'd lost. It's about a year since, now, that I put five shillings on Blush of Dawn for him: and we lost. Then the luck turned, with that ten shillings he had from you: that we put on Singhalese. And since that time, it's been pretty steady, all things considering. What do you say, Master Paul?"

"We're all right when we're *sure*," said Paul. "It's when we're not quite sure that we go down."

"Oh, but we're careful then," said Bassett.

"But when are you *sure*?" smiled Uncle Oscar.

"It's Master Paul, sir," said Bassett, in a secret, religious voice. "It's as if he had it from heaven. Like Daffodil now, for the Lincoln. That was as sure as eggs."

"Did you put anything on Daffodil?" asked Oscar Cresswell.

"Yes, sir. I made my bit."

"And my nephew?"

Bassett was obstinately silent, looking at Paul.

"I made twelve hundred, didn't I, Bassett? I told uncle I was putting three hundred on Daffodil."

"That's right," said Bassett, nodding.

"But where's the money?" asked the uncle.

"I keep it safe locked up, sir. Master Paul, he can have it any minute he likes to ask for it."

"What, fifteen hundred pounds?"

"And twenty! And *forty*, that is, with the twenty he made on the course."

"It's amazing!" said the uncle.

"If Master Paul offers you to be partners, sir, I would, if I were you: if you'll excuse me," said Bassett.

Oscar Cresswell thought about it.

"I'll see the money," he said.

They drove home again, and sure enough, Bassett came round to the garden-house with fifteen hundred pounds in notes. The twenty pounds reserve was left with Joe Glee, in the Turf Commission deposit.

"You see, it's all right, uncle, when I'm *sure*! Then we go strong, for all we're worth. Don't we, Bassett?"

"We do that, Master Paul."

"And when are you sure?" said the uncle, laughing.

"Oh, well, sometimes I'm *absolutely* sure, like about Daffodil," said the boy; "and sometimes I have an idea; and sometimes I haven't even an idea, have I, Bassett? Then we're careful, because we mostly go down."

"You do, do you! And when you're sure, like about Daffodil, what makes you sure, sonny?"

6. Largest of the capital's eight Royal Parks.

“Oh, well, I don’t know,” said the boy uneasily. “I’m sure, you know, uncle; that’s all.”

“It’s as if he had it from heaven, sir,” Bassett reiterated.

“I should say so!” said the uncle.

But he became a partner. And when the Leger[7] was coming on, Paul was “sure” about Lively Spark, which was a quite inconsiderable horse. The boy insisted on putting a thousand on the horse, Bassett went for five hundred, and Oscar Cresswell two hundred. Lively Spark came in first, and the betting had been ten to one against him. Paul had made ten thousand.

“You see,” he said, “I was absolutely sure of him.”

Even Oscar Cresswell had cleared two thousand.

“Look here, son,” he said, “this sort of thing makes me nervous.”

“It needn’t, uncle! Perhaps I shan’t be sure again for a long time.”

“But what are you going to do with your money?” asked the uncle.

“Of course,” said the boy, “I started it for mother. She said she had no luck, because father is unlucky, so I thought if *I* was lucky, it might stop whispering.”

“What might stop whispering?”

“Our house! I *hate* our house for whispering.”

“What does it whisper?”

“Why—why”—the boy fidgeted—”why, I don’t know! But it’s always short of money, you know, uncle.”

“I know it, son, I know it.”

“You know people send mother writs, don’t you, uncle?”

“I’m afraid I do,” said the uncle.

“And then the house whispers like people laughing at you behind your back. It’s awful, that is! I thought if I was lucky—”

“You might stop it,” added the uncle.

The boy watched him with big blue eyes, that had an uncanny cold fire in them, and he said never a word.

“Well then!” said the uncle. “What are we doing?”

“I shouldn’t like mother to know I was lucky,” said the boy.

“Why not, son?”

“She’d stop me.”

“I don’t think she would.”

“Oh!”—and the boy writhed in an odd way—”I *don’t* want her to know, uncle.”

“All right, son! We’ll manage it without her knowing.”

They managed it very easily. Paul, at the other’s suggestion, handed over five thousand pounds to his uncle, who deposited it with the family lawyer, who was then to inform Paul’s mother that a relative had put five thousand pounds into his hands, which sum was to be paid out a thousand pounds at a time, on the mother’s birthday, for the next five years.

“So she’ll have a birthday present of a thousand pounds for five successive years,” said Uncle Oscar. “I hope it won’t make it all the harder for her later.”

Paul’s mother had her birthday in November. The house had been “whispering” worse than ever lately, and even in spite of his luck, Paul could not bear up against it. He was very anxious to see the effect of the birthday letter, telling his mother about the thousand pounds.

When there were no visitors, Paul now took his meals with his parents, as he was beyond the nursery control. His mother went into town nearly every day. She had discovered that she had an odd knack of

7. The last leg of the five British Classic horse races, run every September at Doncaster.

sketching furs and dress materials, so she worked secretly in the studio of a friend who was the chief "artist" for the leading drapers. She drew the figures of ladies in furs and ladies in silk and sequins for the newspaper advertisements. This young woman artist earned several thousand pounds a year, but Paul's mother only made several hundreds, and she was again dissatisfied. She so wanted to be first in something, and she did not succeed, even in making sketches for drapery advertisements.

She was down to breakfast on the morning of her birthday. Paul watched her face as she read her letters. He knew the lawyer's letter. As his mother read it, her face hardened and became more expressionless. Then a cold, determined look came on her mouth. She hid the letter under the pile of others, and said not a word about it.

"Didn't you have anything nice in the post for your birthday, mother?" said Paul.

"Quite moderately nice," she said, her voice cold and absent.

She went away to town without saying more.

But in the afternoon Uncle Oscar appeared. He said Paul's mother had had a long interview with the lawyer, asking if the whole five thousand could not be advanced at once, as she was in debt.

"What do you think, uncle?" said the boy.

"I leave it to you, son."

"Oh, let her have it, then! We can get some more with the other," said the boy.

"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, laddie!" said Uncle Oscar.

"But I'm sure to *know* for the Grand National;[8] or the Lincolnshire; or else the Derby. I'm sure to know for *one* of them," said Paul.

So Uncle Oscar signed the agreement, and Paul's mother touched the whole five thousand. Then something very curious happened. The voices in the house suddenly went mad, like a chorus of frogs on a spring evening. There were certain new furnishings, and Paul had a tutor. He was *really* going to Eton, his father's school, in the following autumn. There were flowers in the winter, and a blossoming of the luxury Paul's mother had been used to. And yet the voices in the house, behind the sprays of mimosa and almond-blossom, and from under the piles of iridescent cushions, simply trilled and screamed in a sort of ecstasy: "There *must* be more money! Oh-h-h! There *must* be more money! Oh, now, now-w! now-w-w—there *must* be more money!—more than ever! More than ever!"

It frightened Paul terribly. He studied away at his Latin and Greek with his tutors. But his intense hours were spent with Bassett. The Grand National had gone by: he had not "known", and had lost a hundred pounds. Summer was at hand. He was in agony for the Lincoln. But even for the Lincoln he didn't "know", and he lost fifty pounds. He became wild-eyed and strange, as if something were going to explode in him.

"Let it alone, son! Don't you bother about it!" urged Uncle Oscar. But it was as if the boy couldn't really hear what his uncle was saying.

"I've got to know for the Derby! I've *got* to know for the Derby!" the child reiterated, his big blue eyes blazing with a sort of madness.

His mother noticed how overwrought he was.

"You'd better go to the seaside. Wouldn't you like to go now to the seaside, instead of waiting? I think you'd better," she said, looking down at him anxiously, her heart curiously heavy because of him.

But the child lifted his uncanny blue eyes.

"I couldn't possibly go before the Derby, mother!" he said. "I couldn't possibly!"

"Why not?" she said, her voice becoming heavy when she was opposed. "Why not? You can still go from the seaside to see the Derby with your Uncle Oscar, if that's what you wish. No need for you to wait here. Besides, I think you care too much about these races. It's a bad sign. My family has been a

8. A steeplechase race held at Aintree Racecourse, Liverpool.

gambling family, and you won't know till you grow up how much damage it has done. But it has done damage. I shall have to send Bassett away, and ask Uncle Oscar not to talk racing to you, unless you promise to be reasonable about it: go away to the seaside and forget it. You're all nerves!"

"I'll do what you like, mother, so long as you don't send me away till after the Derby," the boy said.

"Send you away from where? Just from this house?"

"Yes," he said, gazing at her.

"Why, you curious child, what makes you care about this house so much, suddenly? I never knew you loved it!"

He gazed at her without speaking. He had a secret within a secret, something he had not divulged, even to Bassett or to his Uncle Oscar.

But his mother, after standing undecided and a little bit sullen for some moments, said:

"Very well, then! Don't go to the seaside till after the Derby,[9] if you don't wish it. But promise me you won't let your nerves go to pieces! Promise you won't think so much about horse-racing and *events,* as you call them!"

"Oh no!" said the boy, casually. "I won't think much about them, mother. You needn't worry. I wouldn't worry, mother, if I were you."

"If you were me and I were you," said his mother, "I wonder what we *should* do!"

"But you know you needn't worry, mother, don't you?" the boy repeated.

"I should be awfully glad to know it," she said wearily.

"Oh, well, you *can,* you know. I mean you *ought* to know you needn't worry!" he insisted.

"Ought I? Then I'll see about it," she said.

Paul's secret of secrets was his wooden horse, that which had no name. Since he was emancipated from a nurse and a nursery governess, he had had his rocking-horse removed to his own bedroom at the top of the house.

"Surely you're too big for a rocking-horse!" his mother had remonstrated.

"Well, you see, mother, till I can have a *real* horse, I like to have *some* sort of animal about," had been his quaint answer.

"Do you feel he keeps you company?" she laughed.

"Oh yes! He's very good, he always keeps me company, when I'm there," said Paul.

So the horse, rather shabby, stood in an arrested prance in the boy's bedroom.

The Derby was drawing near, and the boy grew more and more tense. He hardly heard what was spoken to him, he was very frail, and his eyes were really uncanny. His mother had sudden strange seizures of uneasiness about him. Sometimes, for half an hour, she would feel a sudden anxiety about him that was almost anguish. She wanted to rush to him at once, and know he was safe.

Two nights before the Derby, she was at a big party in town, when one of her rushes of anxiety about her boy, her first-born, gripped her heart till she could hardly speak. She fought with the feeling, might and main, for she believed in common-sense. But it was too strong. She had to leave the dance and go downstairs to telephone to the country. The children's nursery governess was terribly surprised and startled at being rung up in the night.

"Are the children all right, Miss Wilmot?"

"Oh yes, they are quite all right."

"Master Paul? Is he all right?"

"He went to bed as right as a trivet. Shall I run up and look at him?"

"No!" said Paul's mother reluctantly. "No! Don't trouble. It's all right. Don't sit up. We shall be home fairly soon." She did not want her son's privacy intruded upon.

9. The richest and most prestigious of the five Classics, held at Epsom Downs, Surrey.

"Very good," said the governess.

It was about one o'clock when Paul's mother and father drove up to their house. All was still. Paul's mother went to her room and slipped off her white fur cloak. She had told her maid not to wait up for her. She heard her husband downstairs, mixing a whisky-and-soda.

And then, because of the strange anxiety at her heart, she stole upstairs to her son's room. Noiselessly she went along the upper corridor. Was there a faint noise? What was it?

She stood, with arrested muscles, outside his door, listening. There was a strange, heavy, and yet not loud noise. Her heart stood still. It was a soundless noise, yet rushing and powerful. Something huge, in violent, hushed motion. What was it? What in God's Name was it? She ought to know. She felt that she *knew* the noise. She knew what it was.

Yet she could not place it. She couldn't say what it was. And on and on it went, like a madness.

Softly, frozen with anxiety and fear, she turned the door-handle.

The room was dark. Yet in the space near the window, she heard and saw something plunging to and fro. She gazed in fear and amazement.

Then suddenly she switched on the light, and saw her son, in his green pyjamas, madly surging on his rocking-horse. The blaze of light suddenly lit him up, as he urged the wooden horse, and lit her up, as she stood, blonde, in her dress of pale green and crystal, in the doorway.

"Paul!" she cried. "Whatever are you doing?"

"It's Malabar!" he screamed, in a powerful, strange voice. "It's Malabar!"

His eyes blazed at her for one strange and senseless second, as he ceased urging his wooden horse. Then he fell with a crash to the ground, and she, all her tormented motherhood flooding upon her, rushed to gather him up.

But he was unconscious, and unconscious he remained, with some brain-fever. He talked and tossed, and his mother sat stonily by his side.

"Malabar! It's Malabar! Bassett, Bassett, I *know:* it's Malabar!"

So the child cried, trying to get up and urge the rocking-horse that gave him his inspiration.

"What does he mean by Malabar?" asked the heart-frozen mother.

"I don't know," said the father, stonily.

"What does he mean by Malabar?" she asked her brother Oscar.

"It's one of the horses running for the Derby," was the answer.

And, in spite of himself, Oscar Cresswell spoke to Bassett, and himself put a thousand on Malabar: at fourteen to one.

The third day of the illness was critical: they were watching for a change. The boy, with his rather long, curly hair, was tossing ceaselessly on the pillow. He neither slept nor regained consciousness, and his eyes were like blue stones. His mother sat, feeling her heart had gone, turned actually into a stone.

In the evening, Oscar Cresswell did not come, but Bassett sent a message, saying could he come up for one moment, just one moment? Paul's mother was very angry at the intrusion, but on second thoughts she agreed. The boy was the same. Perhaps Bassett might bring him to consciousness.

The gardener, a shortish fellow with a little brown moustache and sharp little brown eyes, tiptoed into the room, touched his imaginary cap to Paul's mother, and stole to the bedside, staring with glittering, smallish eyes at the tossing, dying child.

"Master Paul!" he whispered. "Master Paul! Malabar came in first all right, a clean win. I did as you told me. You've made over seventy thousand pounds, you have; you've got over eighty thousand. Malabar came in all right, Master Paul."

"Malabar! Malabar! Did I say Malabar, mother? Did I say Malabar? Do you think I'm lucky, mother? I knew Malabar, didn't I? Over eighty thousand pounds! I call that lucky, don't you, mother? Over eighty

thousand pounds! I knew, didn't I know I knew? Malabar came in all right. If I ride my horse till I'm sure, then I tell you, Basset, you can go as high as you like. Did you go for all you were worth, Bassett?"

"I went a thousand on it, Master Paul."

"I never told you, mother, that if I can ride my horse, and *get there*, then I'm absolutely sure—oh, absolutely! Mother, did I ever tell you? I *am* lucky!"

"No, you never did," said the mother.

But the boy died in the night.

And even as he lay dead, his mother heard her brother's voice saying to her: "My God, Hester, you're eighty-odd thousand to the good, and a poor devil of a son to the bad. But, poor devil, poor devil, he's best gone out of a life where he rides his rocking-horse to find a winner."

166.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

The Horse Dealer's Daughter

1. If you were writing a screenplay of this story, what would your three basic scenes be?
2. Describe the images in each scene. Is there any change in the imagery as the scenes change?
3. What do the water and mud symbolize?
4. How is Joe characterized?
5. In what way is Mabel like a bulldog?
6. What does Mabel's dead mother suggest?
7. Why does Mabel attempt suicide?
8. How does Fergusson change by the end of the story?
9. What are some key differences in the description of the Pervin house in the first and last scenes?
10. How is the theme of the story developed by images and symbols?

The Rocking-Horse Winner

1. How is the story like a fable or fairy tale?
2. What do the voices of the house tell Paul? What do these voices represent psychologically?
3. What, besides a lack of money, dissatisfies Paul's mother?
4. Why doesn't Paul want his mother to know that he is lucky?
5. Is Bassett genuinely concerned about Paul's welfare?
6. What do the many references to religion mean?
7. What does the rocking-horse symbolize?
8. How does the story use the quest myth or archetype?
9. Some critics have seen Lawrence's friend Lady Cynthia Asquith (1887-1960) as the model for Paul's mother. Argue for or against this position. Start with the entry in Wikipedia or Oxford's

Dictionary of National Biography (DNB).

Resources

Film Adaptation *Rocking Horse Winner* Dir. Peter Medak (1976) 30 min.

QR Code Rocking Horse

XXV

T.S. Eliot (1888–1965)

167.

Biography



Figure 1: T. S. Eliot.

Thomas Stearns Eliot was born on September 26, 1888, in St. Louis, Missouri. His father, Henry, was a prosperous businessman, though something of a disappointment to his own father who had expected Henry to follow in his footsteps and become a prominent Unitarian minister. Eliot's mother was a teacher and a poet.

Eliot attended a school in St. Louis founded by his grandfather, and then in 1906 went to Harvard University, whose president at the time was Eliot's cousin. He majored in literature, earning a B.A. and an M.A. By 1910, he was determined to become a poet, and by 1911, he had written one of his iconic poems, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." He was only 23, yet he managed to tap into the consciousness of a middle-aged man, whose low self-esteem ultimately inhibits him from singing the love song he had hoped might win the heart of a woman he hopes to seduce, if not marry.

Over the next decade, Eliot's poetic output diminished as he worked on his Ph.D. in philosophy. His first book, *Prufrock and Other Observations*, was published in 1917, and except for the poem the title alludes to, the book contained little upon which Eliot's reputation is now based. By that time, Eliot was living and working in London, having moved to England to study at Oxford University as part of his Ph.D. requirements. He married, worked as a banker and a literary editor, but he was not happy. His marriage was floundering; he was overworked; and Europe was at war. He suffered a nervous collapse, and, on the advice of his physician, took three months off, part of it spent at a sanatorium in Switzerland.

As it turned out, Eliot's circumstances were auspicious for English poetry. Since 1914, Eliot had been planning to write a poem expressing his disillusionment with the war-torn society and the course his own life had taken. He began to write the poem in 1919, which he showed to his friend Ezra Pound, himself an influential poet and critic who had championed Eliot's work and helped him find publishers. Pound edited the poem, deleting sections he felt were superfluous. Eliot concurred. The result was *The Waste Land*, one of the great poems of the 20th century.

The Waste Land describes a quest for spiritual fulfillment, which is stymied by the social, cultural, and spiritual malaise, which gripped the Western world during and after World War I. The identity of narrator who undertakes the quest shifts dramatically as the poem progresses: at times is apparently Eliot himself; at times an array of mythological, historical, and fictitious characters. Time and place shift also from Mylae in the third century B.C. to present-day London. Structurally the poem is a montage of events and images, dazzling in their intensity, some related to each other, some deliberately disorienting, the effect meant to reflect the confused despair of post-war Europe. There are glimpses of hope, usually taking the form of a veiled offer of spiritual rearmament. There are also hints of ways out of the waste land, but the narrator never quite finds them.

Eliot may have exorcized his demons after writing *The Waste Land*. Certainly, his life took a turn for the better. He became the editor of an influential literary journal *The Criterion*, which published *The Waste Land*, and, in 1925, he became the literary editor of a major publishing company, Faber and Faber. In 1927, he realized, at least in part, some of the stability he sought when he joined the Church of England and became a British citizen. His 1927 poem, "The Journey of the Magi," reflects the hope for a better future that the Three Wise Men experienced upon visiting the infant Jesus.

So too does *The Four Quartets*, a collection of four long poems, which Eliot began to write in the early 1930s and published in 1943. *The Four Quartets* are famously opaque, but, typically, their form and language reflect their theme. Eliot's purpose was to capture the "timeless moment" of the body's union with the spirit, to try to describe, in a word, the Incarnation. The moment is outside of time, outside of history, outside language, but the poet's challenge is to render them in the language the experience defies. Eliot's success in doing so produced a collection of poems that rival *The Waste Land* as the crowning achievement of his career.

Eliot also wrote plays, which he hoped might bring his Christian and conservative values and attitudes to a wider audience than his poetry and criticism reached. The plays he wrote in the 1940s and 1950s—*The Cocktail Party, The Confidential Clerk,* and *The Elder Statesman*—feature upper-middle-class English families, working their way through a variety of crises provoked by infidelity, sibling rivalry, and past indiscretions, bordering in some cases on criminal behaviour. The families are redeemed and their harmony is at least partially restored through a renewed commitment to Christian values. Today, Eliot's plays are not held in as high esteem as his poetry is, though they were well regarded in his own time: *The Cocktail Party* won the Tony Award for the outstanding play of 1950.

Certainly Eliot's drama helped secure his reputation as an outstanding international man of letters, and he was the winner, in 1948, of the Nobel Prize for literature. Thereafter, he semi-retired, writing mainly cultural and literary criticism. In 1957, he married his secretary Valerie Fletcher, nearly 40 years younger than he, and lived happily with her until his death from emphysema in January, 1965.

Media Attributions

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168.

The Hollow Men

A Hypertext version of T. S. Elliot's "The Hollow Man"

Explanatory Notes not covered in web version

Title: In a sense, "The Hollow Men" is a sequel to *The Waste Land*, referring as it does to the waste land's inhabitants, who are "hollow" because of their disconnection from a faith that would enrich their lives.First epigram: from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (cf.). Kurtz was the ivory trader, a hollow man, in the sense that he sacrificed his humanity for the promise of wealth.

Second epigram: The "Old Guy" is Guy Fawkes, who, in 1605, tried to blow up the Parliament buildings in London, as a protest against King James' anti-Catholic legislation. He is still burned in effigy every November 5, the anniversary of his aborted crime.

Part I: The first lines pick up the image of Guy Fawkes burned in effigy ("Headpiece filled with straw") in the form of a scarecrow. He represents the hollow men who live in the waste land of modern society, inarticulate and ineffectual. "Death's other kingdom" (line 14) seems almost preferable.

Part II: The hollow men seem to yearn for "death's dream kingdom," for all its drab and dreary ambience, a better place than the waste land they currently inhabit.

Part III: This first stanza of this part presents a stark vision of "the dead land," the "cactus land." The second stanza suggests hollow men's inability to pray, to communicate, to make love.

Part IV: The first two stanzas of Part IV continue to describe a desolate world of spiritual blindness and meaningless communication. The "tumid river" (line 60) is likely a compilation of the Thames, the Acheron of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and the Congo of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. The third stanza of Part IV seems to offer an antidote to spiritual hollowness, in the form of a vision of "the perpetual star" (line 63), reminiscent of the Star of Bethlehem, which guided the Magi to Jesus' birthplace (cf. "The Journey of the Magi") and the "Multifoliate rose" (line 64), which echoes Dante's image of heaven. The star and the rose are in "death's twilight kingdom" (line 65), in opposition to "death's other Kingdom" (line 14) and "death's dream kingdom" (line 30), which offer false hope of salvation.

Part V: The first stanza is a parody of the children's nursery rhyme, which describes children dancing around a mulberry bush. In the land of the hollow men, the mulberry bush becomes a cactus plant, which echoes the "cactus land" of Part III. The hollow men's inability to put ideas into action, to express an appropriate emotional response, to express physical love, is referenced in subsequent stanzas. The aborted Lord's Prayer suggests, again, that it is a spiritual malaise the Hollow Men suffer.

169.

The Journey of the Magi

[“The Journey of the Magi” from Poetry Archive]

Explanatory Notes not covered in Poetry Archive

Title: The Magi (from the Latin for “wise men”) first appear in the Gospel of Matthew, the first book of the New Testament. They come from “the east,” guided by a bright star, to Bethlehem, to pay homage to Jesus, at the place of his birth. Later accounts fill out the story, employing various legends and some historical speculation. There are three Wise Men: Melchior, from Persia; Caspar, from India; and Balthazar, from Arabia. In some accounts, they are kings; in others, astrologers. They arrive just after the birth of Christ, and they bring with them gold, frankincense, and myrrh, precious gifts, to mark the birth of the Messiah, the King of the Jews. Line 5: The “dead of winter,” in that Christ was born on December 25.

Lines 21-23: Winter gives way to spring, as the Magi come closer to the site of Jesus’ birth.

Line 24: The “three trees” foreshadow the crucifixion of Christ on the cross, flanked by two criminals, also being crucified.

Line 25: The horse foreshadows the Four Horseman of the Apocalypse, figures from the Book of Revelation, the last book of The New Testament. They herald the arrival of the Apocalypse, when God will cast judgment on the human race and grant salvation to the devout. The first of the horses is white.

Line 27: The “dicing” foreshadows the actions of the Roman soldiers who crucified Jesus then rolled dice to determine who would get Christ’s robe. The “silver” foreshadows the disciple Judas’ betrayal of Jesus, whom he identified to the Roman soldiers, who paid him 30 pieces of silver.

Line 43: Having apparently converted to Christianity, after their journey to Bethlehem, the Magus who narrates the story yearns for the death which presages the soul’s immortality.

170.

Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock from Bartleby

Explanatory Notes not covered in Bartleby

Title: By identifying himself, rather pompously, by his first initial and middle name, J. Alfred Prufrock seems an unlikely romantic hero, capable of singing a love song.Introduction: The epigram is from Dante's *Inferno*. The speaker is one Guido da Montafeltro, burning in Hell for crimes committed on Earth. Dante asks about the crimes. Guido's response is the epigram, translated as "If I thought that my reply would be to one who would ever return to the world, this flame would stay, without further movement. But since no one has ever returned alive from this depth, if what I hear is true, without fear of infamy I respond to you." Line 1: The identity of "you and I" shifts throughout the poem. Here Prufrock seems to be alone and talking to himself. Later the "you" is the woman he wants to seduce, possibly propose to. Line 14: The great Italian sculptor and painter (1475 – 1564). His accomplishments and the women's interest in him shake Prufrock's already fragile self-confidence.Line 22: The fog suggests that the poem's setting is London, but Eliot wrote the poem a few years before he moved to London. The setting is likely Eliot's home town of St. Louis, where there was a furniture store called Prufrock-Litton Company, or Boston, near Harvard, where he was a student, when he wrote the poem.

Line 29: The eighth century B.C.E. Greek poet Hesiod's poem "Works and Days" is about the pleasures and accomplishments of farm labour. Eliot, ironically, applies it to the stress of social intercourse.

Line 52: This echoes a line from Shakespeare's play *Twelfth Night*, when Duke Orsino asks his musicians to repeat a strain of music because "it had a dying fall" (1.1.4).

Line 74: Life is so much easier for a crab at the bottom of the ocean than for a man in the throes of a mid-life crisis.

Line 83: The reference is to John the Baptist. According to the account in the Gospel of Mark, John baptized Jesus in the River Jordan. Later John condemned Herod, the King of Galilee, for his incestuous marriage to Herodias, a violation of Old Testament law. Herod imprisoned John. Some days later, Herodias' daughter Salome (from her first marriage to Herod's brother) dances before Herod. He enjoys the performance so much, he tells Salome he will grant her a wish. Herodias tells her to bring her the head of John the Baptist, which he orders done, and the head delivered to Salome on a platter.

Line 92: Echoes a line from Andrew Marvell's 1650's poem "To His Coy Mistress," wherein the narrator implores his love interest to enjoy with him the pleasure of the flesh. Marvell's narrator's

direct and confident approach to asking "the overwhelming question" is an ironic contrast to Prufrock's hesitant insecurity. Line 23 also echoes the Marvell poem.

Line 94: Whom Jesus restored to life, as described in the Gospel of John.

Line 111: Prince of Denmark, tragic hero in play by Shakespeare.

Line 113: A royal tour.

Line 117: Suggests that Prufrock identifies more closely with Polonius, often fatuous advisor to Claudius, the King of Denmark and Hamlet's uncle. Like Hamlet, though, Prufrock is not decisive. "Full of high sentence" means opinionated; sententious.

Line 122: Presumably because it might cause flatulence and embarrass him.

171.

The Waste Land

[“The Waste Land” from Bartleby]

Explanatory Notes not covered in Bartleby

The title: The title references Eliot’s view of Western civilization in the years after World War I. Writers, artists, and intellectuals, especially, were stunned and dispirited by the inhumanity the war revealed. The poem is full of images reflecting Eliot’s despair, images of violence, lust, pollution, death, apathy, selfishness, decay—all redolent of the waste land he believed his world had become.The epigram: The text is in Latin and Greek and translates as follows: “For once I myself saw with my own eyes the Sibyl at Cumae hanging in a cage, and when the boys said to her ‘Sibyl, what do you want’? she replied “I want to die.’” The speaker is Encolpius, narrator of the first-century novel *Satyricon* by Gaius Petronius. The Sibyls were old women in Greek mythology, capable of foretelling the future. Apollo granted the Sibyl at Cumae (an ancient Greek city) immortality, but she did not ask for perpetual youth, and so she withered into old age. The desire for death she expresses echoes throughout the poem. The Cumaean Sybil reappears later in the poem as the fortune teller Madame Sosostris.

The dedication: Ezra Pound was Eliot’s friend and fellow poet. He edited *The Waste Land*, deleting whole sections from the original, when he thought they added little to the poem’s intensity. Eliot agreed with Pound’s changes, hence Pound is “Il miglior fabbro,” the better craftsman.

Part One: The Burial of the Dead: Part One contains four brief narratives, their plots and characters disparate, but united by the presence in each of unregenerative death.

Line 1: One of the great works of English literature, *The Canterbury Tales*, by Geoffrey Chaucer (1343?-1400), opens with lines in praise of the restorative powers of April, bringing the spring rain, which will bring nature back to life, and encourage the citizens of London to set out on their religious pilgrimage to Canterbury, England’s holiest city. But in the waste land of post-war Europe, spring lilacs and the romantic feelings they inspire seem out of place compared to the more desirable “forgetful snow” of winter.

Line 5: The pronoun “us” likely refers to Countess Marie Larisch, cousin of the Bavarian King

Ludwig, who, in 1886, drowned in the Starnbergersee, a lake just south of Munich. Death by water is a recurring image throughout the poem. Marie's pride in her German heritage, expressed in line 12 (the translation is "I am not Russian, at all; I come from Lithuania, a true German") suggests the nationalism that was a contributing cause of World War I.

Line 13: The archduke, to Eliot's contemporary readers, would bring to mind Franz Ferdinand (1875-1914), heir to the vast Austro-Hungarian Empire; his assassination triggered World War I.

Lines 31-34: Part of a melody from Wagner's opera, *Tristan and Isolde*, about lovers who long to be reunited but fail to do so. The German translates as "Fresh blows the wind to the homeland; my Irish child, where are you waiting." The inability to consummate true love is a recurring motif in the poem.

Line 35: Apparently the narrator gives hyacinths to a young woman, as a romantic gesture, but, in a waste land, love cannot be fulfilled. In Greek mythology, Apollo, god of music and poetry, loved Hyacinth, a handsome young man, whose accidental, untimely death Apollo venerated when hyacinth flowers grew from the boy's spilled blood. Note, again here, the motif of death and rebirth.

Line 42: "Waste and empty is the sea." Continues the *Tristan and Isolde* story from lines 31-34. Here a shepherd tells Tristan there is no sign of Isolde's arrival.

Line 43: The inhabitants of a waste land put more faith in fortune tellers than in holy men. The future foretold my Madame Sosostris references death, especially death by drowning. Water brings life back to nature and purifies Christians in baptism, but in the waste land it destroys. In Eliot's own note for this section, he admits he invents Tarot cards and uses real ones arbitrarily to foreshadow later events in the poem. Madame Sosostris echoes the Cumaean Sybil of the poem's epigraph.

Lines 63-75: Here the narrator seems to be the Questing Knight, the central figure—the protagonist—of the poem. Eliot acknowledged the influence on his poem of the grail legend, explained in detail in Jessie L. Weston's 1920 study *From Ritual to Romance*. A Questing Knight embarks on a search for the Holy Grail, the cup from which Jesus and his disciples drank wine at The Last Supper. According to the legend, the waste land would be restored if the ruler of the land, the ailing "Fisher King" is healed and the Holy Grail is found. The Knight's journey through war-ravaged London, whose citizens walk like zombies, indicates the extent of his challenge, as does the broken church bell of line 68, a symbol of lost faith. Mylae (line 70) was the site of an ancient battle and symbolizes the recurrence of war throughout human history. The narrator's questions to an old friend, Stetson, suggest, again, death and resurrection, or lack thereof.

Line 76: You, hypocritical reader; my mirror image; my friend. Eliot quite suddenly breaks the narrative to address directly readers of the poem. Apparently, he wants his readers to understand they too are part of the waste land and complicit in its construction.

Part Two: A Game of Chess: In *A Game at Chess*, 17th-century playwright Thomas Middleton uses a chess match as a metaphor for negotiations between the kings of Britain and Spain for the marriage of their children, a typical waste land marriage, for political expedience, not love. The actual chess match does not occur until later in this section, where, again, it seems to occur between two people in a loveless marriage, possibly a reference to Eliot's own marriage to his first wife, Vivien, the breakdown of which influenced the composition of the poem.

Lines 77-110: In Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, Enobarbus begins his description of Cleopatra, with words—"The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne / Burned on the water"—clearly echoed in this passage. Cleopatra, of course, was not above using love and sex for political gain. The description here of her royal room, rendered in beautiful Shakespearean blank verse, also echoes waste land love and sex. Philomel (line 99) was raped by her brother-in-law, King Tereus and was transformed into a nightingale.

Lines 111-138: The scene shifts suddenly to record a conversation, perhaps between a husband and wife, perhaps echoing a conversation between Eliot and his wife, indicating their inability to communicate meaningfully with each other. The "Shakespeherian Rag" of line 128 is the title of a popular song of the time and may suggest Eliot's own vocation as a poet.

Lines 139-172: Again the scene shifts suddenly to a London pub to record a conversation between two women—actually a monologue from one of the women telling a story about the relationship between her friend Lil and Lil's husband. Though Lil is young, she looks much older, and she blames "them pills I took, bring it off" (line 159), a reference to her abortion. In Eliot's time, of course, society was less tolerant about abortion and homosexuality than it is now, and their presence are more symptoms of a world which has become a waste land. The refrain in this section "HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME" are the words of the publican, telling his patrons the pub is soon to close. "Gammon" (line 166) is an English dish made of ham or bacon.

Part Three: The Fire Sermon: Preached by Buddha, against the fires of lust and hatred, which stymie spiritual fulfillment and destroy the sense of community necessary for a healthy society.

Line 173: i.e., the trees which formed a tent above the Thames have lost their leaves.

Line 182: Lake Leman is better known as Lake Geneva. Eliot worked on *The Waste Land*, while he was in Lausanne, on the shores of Lake Geneva, recovering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Lines 185- 186: The Gothic image here is one of several in the poem. The lines echo Andrew Marvell's poem "To His Coy Mistress," wherein a young man tries to seduce a young woman, arguing that time passes so quickly, we must live life to the fullest.

Line 189: The pronoun "I" here refers to the poem's main character, the Questing Knight, in search of ways to restore the waste land. Fishing, a Christian symbol for spiritual restoration, recurs in several scenes throughout the poem and is embodied in the symbolic ruler of the land, the ailing Fisher King. The setting described here indicates the extent of the challenge to the Questing Knight.

Lines 197-201: In another instance of the kind of topical flight that occurs throughout the poem, the Questing Knight recalls lines from a poem by John Day, which he blends with lines from a bawdy Australian ballad, sung by the troops in World War I. The lines suggest the sexual promiscuity, in Eliot's mind another symptom of a waste land.

Line 202: A line from a sonnet by French poet Paul Verlaine (1844-1896), which translates "And O, the voices of the children, singing in the dome." The singing occurs while Parsifal, the Questing Knight, struggles to resist sensual temptations, which would inhibit his search for the Grail and his attempts to heal the Fisher King. It is, as such, a key line in the poem.

Lines 203-206: The song of the nightingale, from line 100, echoes here, as does Tereus' rape of Philomel, cf. note to line 99.

Lines 207-214: Here the Questing Knight seems to continue his journey through London. A businessman, one Mr. Eugenides from Smyrna befriends him. Smyrna—now Izmir— is an ancient seaport in Western Turkey. The initials "c.i.f." stand for either "carriage and insurance free" or "cost, insurance, and freight." Sexual temptation which waylays the Questing Knight may be hinted at here. In Eliot's day, the Canon Street, if not the Metropole Hotel, was reputed to be a site for homosexual hookups and liaisons.

Lines 215-256: In the Waste Land, sex is loveless and unfulfilling, not affectionate and restorative. In this section, a young man, "a small house agent's clerk," who works in the City pays a visit—in modern parlance a "booty call"—to a young woman, a secretary. Their sexual encounter is passionless and mechanical. The young man leaves, and the young woman is glad it is all over. The narrator of this section is Tiresias. In Greek mythology, he settled a dispute between Jove and Juno, who were arguing about the extent to which men and women experienced sexual pleasure, Jove asserting that a woman's pleasure in sex was greater; Juno asserting a man's was. Tiresias was the ideal judge because he had lived both as a man and as a woman. He judged in favour of Jove. Furious, Juno rendered him blind, but Jove, to compensate, gave him the power to foretell the future. Tiresias recurs in Greek mythology, as one who knows the future. In his own note to this section, Eliot asserts that Tiresias, a prophet both male and female, unites all of the characters in the poem.

Lines 257-265: Here the Questing Knight walks through a part of London which belies the waste land setting the poet has described to this point. He hears pleasant music coming from a bar, within which fishermen enjoy each other's company over lunch. Nearby is a famous London church, St. Magnus Martyr (line 264), which Eliot explains, in one of his own notes for the poem, "is to my mind

one of the finest among Wren's interiors." An important theme of the poem—that faith in God helps us find our way through the waste land—is referenced here.

Lines 266-67: The polluted waters of the Thames brings back the poem's dominant waste land imagery.

Line 276: The Isles of Dogs (actually a peninsula) is near the borough of Greenwich in south London.

Lines 277-78: The neologisms are meant to imitate the sound of pealing bells, perhaps—and significantly—of a church.

Line 279: The reference is to Queen Elizabeth I and her favourite courtier, Robert Dudley, the earl of Leicester, who may have been her lover. They would sail upon the Thames, flirting in a way that disconcerted onlookers, an apparent reference, again, to the distasteful nature of love in a waste land.

Lines 292-295; 296-299; 300-306: Eliot explained these three stanzas as songs from each of the three "Thames daughters," modelled on the Rhinedaughters in an opera by Wagner. The Rhinedaughters bemoan the Rhine River's loss of beauty. Each song references a different Thames community: Richmond, Moorgate, and Margate. The songs also suggest recurring waste land images, especially the inability of couples to communicate. The link to Germany, at the time Great Britain's bitter enemy, is significant.

Line 307: Here the poem, typically, jump cuts from London to Carthage, where St. Augustine lived a debauched life, until he was saved by the fire of God's love, according to the story he tells in his *Confessions*. Eliot links Buddha's *Fire Sermon* with Augustine's story.

Part Four: Death by Water: Water is an important symbol throughout the poem. In a waste land, water drowns, as it drowns Phlebas the Phoenician sailor in this section. The Phoenician sailor was a card in Madame Sosostris' tarot pack in Part One, and he reappears as Mr. Eugenides, the currant salesman, in Part Three. Note the pun on current, line 315. Water should also restore life, and, as in Christian baptism, wash sins away, but water has no such effect upon Phlebas.

Part Five: What the Thunder Said: The thunder "speaks" later in this part, and its message is one of the poem's main themes.

Line 323: The "gardens" suggests the Garden of Gethsemane, site of Jesus' betrayal and trial.

Line 328: Here the pronoun “He” likely refers, again, to Jesus, his death, and, this being the waste land, the unlikelihood of his resurrection.

Lines 331-359: This passage provides a dramatic physical description of the waste land, a rocky terrain devoid of the water that would bring it life. The cicada (line 354) suggests the biblical plague of locusts. The discordant buzz of the cicada silences the beautiful song of the hermit-thrush (line 357).

Lines 360-366: The “third” is the resurrected Christ whose spirit appeared to two of his disciples, as they walked to Emmaus (near Jerusalem) after Christ’s crucifixion. The disciples do not recognize him.

Line 367: The sound is likely composite—of war planes, sirens, and the cries of mothers. The rest of this section resonates with sounds and images of war and destruction.

Line 378: As the Questing Knight gets closer to the Chapel Perilous, where he is to rescue the Fisher King and restore vitality to the waste land, the obstacles he encounters become Gothic in nature, never more so than in this unnerving section of the poem.

Line 393: The crowing of the cock, signals the departure of evil spirits. Here, the climax of the narrative of the poem, the rain falls.

Lines 396-398: Ganga is the Ganges River in India. Himavant refers to the Himalayan Mountains. Note that the life-giving rain falls not in the waste land of Western Europe, but in the East.

Line 400: The title of this section is “What the Thunder Says,” and here the thunder speaks. Its message conveys a crucial theme of the poem. The message is adapted from the *Upanishads*, which are ancient Sanskrit texts, upon which Buddhism is based. Eliot was a student of Sanskrit and the *Upanishads* are an important influence on the poem.

Line 402: Datta means give or be charitable.

Line 412: Dayadhvam means show compassion.

Line 417: Coriolanus is a Shakespearean tragic hero, who, as a result of injured pride, leads the enemy against his own homeland. He is the apotheosis of the compassion the waste land needs to heal.

Line 419: Damyata means exercise self-control—as an expert sailor, in the lines following, controls his craft.

Lines 424-426: The image here of the Questing Knight, fishing, the “arid plain behind” him, suggests a happy ending to the story, but this is undercut by the implication that the Knight will set his “lands in order” but will turn his back on the waste land.

Lines 427-434: In its last “stanza,” the content of the poem is summarized. The “London bridge is falling down” nursery rhyme suggests the collapse of Western society in the wake of the World War I. Line 428, from Dante’s *Purgatorio*, translates “he hid himself in the fire which refines them,” and suggests the spiritual renewal Eliot felt essential to transition from waste to promised land. Line 429, from the Latin poem “Vigil of Venus,” translates “When shall I be as the swallow”? and suggests the metaphorical wish for springtime and recalls the nightingale referenced earlier in the poem. Line 430, from a French sonnet, translates “The Prince of Aquitaine in the ruined tower” and suggests the Questing Knight, in the midst of a crumbling world, searching for a way to heal the Fisher King. “These fragments,” of line 431, may refer to the poem itself. Line 432 references a play, *The Spanish Tragedy*, by Kyd, wherein the protagonist, Hieronymo, avenges his son’s death by writing a play, in the course of which his son’s murderers are themselves killed. In line 433, the Sanskrit words “redolent of for charity, compassion, and self-control”—the key to the theme of the poem—are repeated. The poem’s final line, 434, is modelled on a typical ending to a Upanishad (see note to line 400). “Shantih,” means peace beyond understanding and suggests the state of a world, unlike the one described in most of the poem, a world within which charity, compassion, and self-control are seminal values.

172.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

The Hollow Men

1. Compare and contrast "The Hollow Men" and *The Waste Land*. "The Hollow Men" was written several years after *The Waste Land*. Does "The Hollow Men" perpetuate the stark vision of *The Waste Land*, accentuate it, or offer more hope for salvation? Support your answer.
2. Consider the form of "The Hollow Men": short, free-verse lines, in five parts, sub-divided into stanzas of various length and number. Some lines seem to end before the poet's thought is completed. How does this form augment the poem's theme?
3. Is "The Hollow Men" as relevant today as it was when Eliot wrote it? Who are "The Hollow Men" of contemporary society, and what do they need to lead a more fulfilling life?

The Journey of the Magi

1. Compare and contrast the tone (cf. Glossary) of "The Journey of the Magi" with the tone of the earlier poems by Eliot. Is there a difference in tone? How do you account for the difference or the lack thereof?
2. Like "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," "The Journey of the Magi" is a free-verse narrative poem, its speaker one of the Magi or Wise Men. Compare and contrast the characters of Prufrock and the Wise Man.
3. Is "The Journey of the Magi" a Christian poem only, or is it relevant to people of other faiths? Explain your answer.

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

1. What features of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" identify it as a dramatic monologue (cf. Glossary)?
2. Why does Prufrock find it impossible to ask "the overwhelming question"? What changes might he make to his life and attitude that would help him ask the woman the question?
3. Does Prufrock evoke your pity? Your condemnation? Can you identify with him, in any way?

The Waste Land

1. *The Waste Land* is widely considered to be one of the great poems of the 20th century. How do you account for its reputation? Do you think its reputation is justified?
2. In its form, *The Waste Land* resembles a montage film, with sudden jump cuts from one scene to another, the relationship among the scenes often indeterminate, at least initially. How does the form of the poem augment its meaning?
3. In what sense (if at all) would you say *The Waste Land* remains relevant to contemporary society?

Resources

Voices and Visions. A useful video documentary on T. S. Eliot.

QR Code Voices and Visions

XXVI

Katherine Mansfield (1888–1923)

173.

Biography



Figure 1: Katherine Mansfield.

Katherine Mansfield, one of New Zealand's most famous writer, was closely associated with D.H. Lawrence and something of a rival of Virginia Woolf. Mansfield's creative years were burdened with loneliness, illness, jealousy, alienation, all of which is reflected in her work with the bitter depiction of marital and family relationships of her middle-class characters. Her short stories are also notable for their use of stream of consciousness. Like the Russian writer Anton Chekhov, Mansfield depicted trivial events and subtle changes in human behaviour.

Katherine Mansfield was born in Wellington, New Zealand, into a middle-class colonial family. Her father, Harold Beauchamp, was a banker, and her mother, Annie Burnell Dyer, was of genteel origins. She lived for six years in the rural village of Karori. Later in life Mansfield said, "I imagine I was always writing. Twaddle it was, too. But better far write twaddle or anything, anything, than nothing at all." At the age of nine, she had her first story published. Entitled "Enna Blake," it appeared in *The High School Reporter* in Wellington, with the editor's comment that it "shows promise of great merit."

As a first step to her rebellion against her background, she moved to London in 1903 and studied at Queen's College, where she joined the staff of the *College Magazine*. Returning to New Zealand in 1906, she took up music and became an accomplished cellist, but her father denied her the opportunity to become a professional musician. During this time, she had romantic affairs with both men and women.

In 1908, she studied typing and bookkeeping at Wellington Technical College. Her lifelong friend Ida

Baker (known as "L.M." or "Leslie Moore" in her diary and correspondence) persuaded Mansfield's father to allow Katherine to move back to England with an allowance of £100 a year. There she devoted herself to writing. Mansfield never visited New Zealand again.

After an unhappy marriage in 1909 to George Brown, whom she left a few days after the wedding, Mansfield toured for a while as an extra in opera. Before the marriage she had had an affair with Garnett Trowell, a musician, and became pregnant. In Bavaria, where Mansfield spent some time, she suffered a miscarriage. During her stay in Germany, she wrote satirical sketches of German characters, which were published in 1911 under the title *In a German Pension*. Earlier her stories had appeared in *The New Age*. On her return to London, Mansfield became ill with an untreated sexually transmitted disease she contracted from Floryan Sobieniowski, a condition which contributed to her weak health for the rest of her life. Sobieniowski was a Polish émigré translator whom she met in Germany. Her first story published in England was "The Child-Who-Was-Tired," which was about an overworked nursemaid who kills a baby.

Mansfield attended literary parties without much enthusiasm: "Pretty rooms and pretty people, pretty coffee, and cigarettes out of a silver tankard… I was wretched." Always outspoken, she was once turned out of an omnibus (a horse-drawn bus) after calling another woman a whore; the woman had declared that all suffragettes ought to be trampled to death by horses. In 1911, she met John Middleton Murry, a socialist and former literary critic, who was first a tenant in her flat, then her lover. Until 1914 she published stories in *Rhythm* and *The Blue Review*. During the war, she travelled restlessly between England and France. After her brother "Chummie"died in World War I, Mansfield focused her writing on New Zealand and her family, and "Prelude" (1916), one of her most famous stories, comes from this period. After divorcing her first husband in 1918, Mansfield married Murry. In the same year, she was found to have tuberculosis.

Mansfield and Murry were closely associated with D.H. Lawrence and his wife Frieda. Upon learning that Murry had an affair with the Princess Bibesco (née Asquith), Mansfield objected not to the affair but to her letters to Murry. In a letter to the princess, she wrote: "I am afraid you must stop writing these love letters to my husband while he and I live together. It is one of the things which is not done in our world."

Her last years Mansfield spent in southern France and in Switzerland, seeking relief from tuberculosis. As a part of her treatment in 1922 at an institute, Mansfield had to lie a few hours every day on a platform suspended over a cow manger. She breathed odours emanating from below, but the treatment did no good. Without the company of her literary friends, family, or her husband, she wrote much about her own roots and her childhood. Mansfield died of a pulmonary hemorrhage on January 9, 1923, in Gurdjieff Institute, near Fontainebleau, France. Her last words were: "I love the rain. I want the feeling of it on my face."

Mansfield's family memoirs were collected in *Bliss* (1920). Only three volumes of Mansfield's stories were published during her lifetime. "Miss Brill" is about a woman who enjoys the beginning of the "season." She goes to her "special" seat with her fur. She had taken it out of its box in the afternoon, shaken off the moth-powder, and given it a brush. She feels that she has a part in the play in the park, and somebody will notice if she isn't there. A couple sits near her. The girl laughs at her fur and the man says: "Why does she come here at all – who wants her? Why doesn't she keep her silly old mug at home?" Miss Brill hurries back home, unclasps the neckpiece quickly, and puts it in the box. "But when she put the lid on she thought she heard something crying."

In "The Garden Party" (1921), an extravagant garden party is arranged on a beautiful day. Laura, the daughter of the party's hostess, hears of the accidental death of a young local working-class man, Mr. Scott, who lived in the neighbourhood. Laura wants to cancel the party, but her mother refuses to understand. She fills a basket with sandwiches, cakes, pastries, and other food, goes to the widow's

house, and sees the dead man in the bedroom where he is lying. "He was wonderful, beautiful. While they were laughing and while the band was playing, this marvel had come to the lane." Crying she tells her brother, who is looking for her: "'It was simply marvellous. But, Laurie –' She stopped, she looked at her brother. 'Isn't life,' she stammered, 'isn't life –' But what life was she couldn't explain. No matter. He quite understood."

Mansfield was greatly influenced by Anton Chekov, sharing his warm humanity and attention to small details of human behaviour. Her influence on the development of the modern short story was also notable. Among her literary friends were Aldous Huxley, Virginia Woolf, who considered her overpraised, and D.H. Lawrence, who later turned against Murry and her. Mansfield's journal, letters, and scrapbook were edited by her husband, who ignored her wish that he should "tear up and burn as much as possible" of the papers she left behind her.

174.

Miss Brill

Katherine Mansfield

Although it was so brilliantly fine—the blue sky powdered with gold and great spots of light like white wine splashed over the Jardins Publiques[1]—Miss Brill was glad that she had decided on her fur. The air was motionless, but when you opened your mouth there was just a faint chill, like a chill from a glass of iced water before you sip, and now and again a leaf came drifting—from nowhere, from the sky. Miss Brill put up her hand and touched her fur. Dear little thing! It was nice to feel it again. She had taken it out of its box that afternoon, shaken out the moth-powder, given it a good brush, and rubbed the life back into the dim little eyes. "What has been happening to me?" said the sad little eyes. Oh, how sweet it was to see them snap at her again from the red eiderdown!… But the nose, which was of some black composition, wasn't at all firm. It must have had a knock, somehow. Never mind—a little dab of black sealing-wax when the time came—when it was absolutely necessary… Little rogue! Yes, she really felt like that about it. Little rogue biting its tail just by her left ear. She could have taken it off and laid it on her lap and stroked it. She felt a tingling in her hands and arms, but that came from walking, she supposed. And when she breathed, something light and sad—no, not sad, exactly—something gentle seemed to move in her bosom.

There were a number of people out this afternoon, far more than last Sunday. And the band sounded louder and gayer. That was because the Season had begun. For although the band played all the year round on Sundays, out of season it was never the same. It was like some one playing with only the family to listen; it didn't care how it played if there weren't any strangers present. Wasn't the conductor wearing a new coat, too? She was sure it was new. He scraped with his foot and flapped his arms like a rooster about to crow, and the bandsmen sitting in the green rotunda blew out their cheeks and glared at the music. Now there came a little "flutey" bit—very pretty!—a little chain of bright drops. She was sure it would be repeated. It was; she lifted her head and smiled.

Only two people shared her "special" seat: a fine old man in a velvet coat, his hands clasped over a huge carved walking-stick, and a big old woman, sitting upright, with a roll of knitting on her embroidered apron. They did not speak. This was disappointing, for Miss Brill always looked forward to the conversation. She had become really quite expert, she thought, at listening as though she didn't listen, at sitting in other people's lives just for a minute while they talked round her.

She glanced, sideways, at the old couple. Perhaps they would go soon. Last Sunday, too, hadn't been as interesting as usual. An Englishman and his wife, he wearing a dreadful Panama hat and she button boots. And she'd gone on the whole time about how she ought to wear spectacles; she knew she needed them; but that it was no good getting any; they'd be sure to break and they'd never keep on. And he'd been so patient. He'd suggested everything—gold rims, the kind that curved round your ears, little pads inside the bridge. No, nothing would please her. "They'll always be sliding down my nose!" Miss Brill had wanted to shake her.

The old people sat on the bench, still as statues. Never mind, there was always the crowd to watch.

1. Municipal public gardens.

To and fro, in front of the flower-beds and the band rotunda, the couples and groups paraded, stopped to talk, to greet, to buy a handful of flowers from the old beggar who had his tray fixed to the railings. Little children ran among them, swooping and laughing; little boys with big white silk bows under their chins, little girls, little French dolls, dressed up in velvet and lace. And sometimes a tiny staggerer came suddenly rocking into the open from under the trees, stopped, stared, as suddenly sat down "flop," until its small high-stepping mother, like a young hen, rushed scolding to its rescue. Other people sat on the benches and green chairs, but they were nearly always the same, Sunday after Sunday, and—Miss Brill had often noticed—there was something funny about nearly all of them. They were odd, silent, nearly all old, and from the way they stared they looked as though they'd just come from dark little rooms or even—even cupboards!

Behind the rotunda the slender trees with yellow leaves down drooping, and through them just a line of sea, and beyond the blue sky with gold-veined clouds.

Tum-tum-tum tiddle-um! tiddle-um! tum tiddley-um tum ta! blew the band.

Two young girls in red came by and two young soldiers in blue met them, and they laughed and paired and went off arm-in-arm. Two peasant women with funny straw hats passed, gravely, leading beautiful smoke-coloured donkeys. A cold, pale nun hurried by. A beautiful woman came along and dropped her bunch of violets, and a little boy ran after to hand them to her, and she took them and threw them away as if they'd been poisoned. Dear me! Miss Brill didn't know whether to admire that or not! And now an ermine toque and a gentleman in grey met just in front of her. He was tall, stiff, dignified, and she was wearing the ermine toque she'd bought when her hair was yellow. Now everything, her hair, her face, even her eyes, was the same colour as the shabby ermine, and her hand, in its cleaned glove, lifted to dab her lips, was a tiny yellowish paw. Oh, she was so pleased to see him—delighted! She rather thought they were going to meet that afternoon. She described where she'd been—everywhere, here, there, along by the sea. The day was so charming—didn't he agree? And wouldn't he, perhaps?… But he shook his head, lighted a cigarette, slowly breathed a great deep puff into her face, and even while she was still talking and laughing, flicked the match away and walked on. The ermine toque was alone; she smiled more brightly than ever. But even the band seemed to know what she was feeling and played more softly, played tenderly, and the drum beat, "The Brute! The Brute!" over and over. What would she do? What was going to happen now? But as Miss Brill wondered, the ermine toque turned, raised her hand as though she'd seen some one else, much nicer, just over there, and pattered away. And the band changed again and played more quickly, more gayly than ever, and the old couple on Miss Brill's seat got up and marched away, and such a funny old man with long whiskers hobbled along in time to the music and was nearly knocked over by four girls walking abreast.

Oh, how fascinating it was! How she enjoyed it! How she loved sitting here, watching it all! It was like a play. It was exactly like a play. Who could believe the sky at the back wasn't painted? But it wasn't till a little brown dog trotted on solemn and then slowly trotted off, like a little "theatre" dog, a little dog that had been drugged, that Miss Brill discovered what it was that made it so exciting. They were all on the stage. They weren't only the audience, not only looking on; they were acting. Even she had a part and came every Sunday. No doubt somebody would have noticed if she hadn't been there; she was part of the performance after all. How strange she'd never thought of it like that before! And yet it explained why she made such a point of starting from home at just the same time each week—so as not to be late for the performance—and it also explained why she had quite a queer, shy feeling at telling her English pupils how she spent her Sunday afternoons. No wonder! Miss Brill nearly laughed out loud. She was on the stage. She thought of the old invalid gentleman to whom she read the newspaper four afternoons a week while he slept in the garden. She had got quite used to the frail head on the cotton pillow, the hollowed eyes, the open mouth and the high pinched nose. If he'd been dead she mightn't have noticed for weeks; she wouldn't have minded. But suddenly he knew he was having the paper read

to him by an actress! “An actress!” The old head lifted; two points of light quivered in the old eyes. “An actress—are ye?” And Miss Brill smoothed the newspaper as though it were the manuscript of her part and said gently; “Yes, I have been an actress for a long time.”

The band had been having a rest. Now they started again. And what they played was warm, sunny, yet there was just a faint chill—a something, what was it?—not sadness—no, not sadness—a something that made you want to sing. The tune lifted, lifted, the light shone; and it seemed to Miss Brill that in another moment all of them, all the whole company, would begin singing. The young ones, the laughing ones who were moving together, they would begin, and the men’s voices, very resolute and brave, would join them. And then she too, she too, and the others on the benches—they would come in with a kind of accompaniment—something low, that scarcely rose or fell, something so beautiful—moving… And Miss Brill’s eyes filled with tears and she looked smiling at all the other members of the company. Yes, we understand, we understand, she thought—though what they understood she didn’t know.

Just at that moment a boy and girl came and sat down where the old couple had been. They were beautifully dressed; they were in love. The hero and heroine, of course, just arrived from his father’s yacht. And still soundlessly singing, still with that trembling smile, Miss Brill prepared to listen.

“No, not now,” said the girl. “Not here, I can’t.”

“But why? Because of that stupid old thing at the end there?” asked the boy. “Why does she come here at all—who wants her? Why doesn’t she keep her silly old mug at home?”

“It’s her fu-ur which is so funny,” giggled the girl. “It’s exactly like a fried whiting.[2]”

“Ah, be off with you!” said the boy in an angry whisper. Then: “Tell me, ma petite chere—”

“No, not here,” said the girl. “Not yet.”

On her way home she usually bought a slice of honey-cake at the baker’s. It was her Sunday treat. Sometimes there was an almond in her slice, sometimes not. It made a great difference. If there was an almond it was like carrying home a tiny present—a surprise—something that might very well not have been there. She hurried on the almond Sundays and struck the match for the kettle in quite a dashing way.

But to-day she passed the baker’s by, climbed the stairs, went into the little dark room—her room like a cupboard—and sat down on the red eiderdown. She sat there for a long time. The box that the fur came out of was on the bed. She unclasped the necklet quickly; quickly, without looking, laid it inside. But when she put the lid on she thought she heard something crying.

2. A common, cod-like fish.

175.

The Daughters of the Late Colonel: I

Katherine Mansfield

The week after was one of the busiest weeks of their lives. Even when they went to bed it was only their bodies that lay down and rested; their minds went on, thinking things out, talking things over, wondering, deciding, trying to remember where…

Constantia lay like a statue, her hands by her sides, her feet just overlapping each other, the sheet up to her chin. She stared at the ceiling.

“Do you think father would mind if we gave his top-hat to the porter?”

“The porter?” snapped Josephine. “Why ever the porter? What a very extraordinary idea!”

“Because,” said Constantia slowly, “he must often have to go to funerals. And I noticed at—at the cemetery that he only had a bowler.” She paused. “I thought then how very much he’d appreciate a top-hat. We ought to give him a present, too. He was always very nice to father.”

“But,” cried Josephine, flouncing on her pillow and staring across the dark at Constantia, “father’s head!” And suddenly, for one awful moment, she nearly giggled. Not, of course, that she felt in the least like giggling. It must have been habit. Years ago, when they had stayed awake at night talking, their beds had simply heaved. And now the porter’s head, disappearing, popped out, like a candle, under father’s hat… The giggle mounted, mounted; she clenched her hands; she fought it down; she frowned fiercely at the dark and said “Remember” terribly sternly.

“We can decide to-morrow,” she said.

Constantia had noticed nothing; she sighed.

“Do you think we ought to have our dressing-gowns dyed as well?”

“Black?” almost shrieked Josephine.

“Well, what else?” said Constantia. “I was thinking—it doesn’t seem quite sincere, in a way, to wear black out of doors and when we’re fully dressed, and then when we’re at home—”

“But nobody sees us,” said Josephine. She gave the bedclothes such a twitch that both her feet became uncovered, and she had to creep up the pillows to get them well under again.

“Kate does,” said Constantia. “And the postman very well might.”

Josephine thought of her dark-red slippers, which matched her dressing-gown, and of Constantia’s favourite indefinite green ones which went with hers. Black! Two black dressing-gowns and two pairs of black woolly slippers, creeping off to the bathroom like black cats.

“I don’t think it’s absolutely necessary,” said she.

Silence. Then Constantia said, “We shall have to post the papers with the notice in them to-morrow to catch the Ceylon mail… How many letters have we had up till now?”

“Twenty-three.”

Josephine had replied to them all, and twenty-three times when she came to “We miss our dear father so much” she had broken down and had to use her handkerchief, and on some of them even to soak up a very light-blue tear with an edge of blotting-paper. Strange! She couldn’t have put it on—but twenty-three times. Even now, though, when she said over to herself sadly “We miss our dear father so much,” she could have cried if she’d wanted to.

"Have you got enough stamps?" came from Constantia.

"Oh, how can I tell?" said Josephine crossly. "What's the good of asking me that now?"

"I was just wondering," said Constantia mildly.

Silence again. There came a little rustle, a scurry, a hop.

"A mouse," said Constantia.

"It can't be a mouse because there aren't any crumbs," said Josephine.

"But it doesn't know there aren't," said Constantia.

A spasm of pity squeezed her heart. Poor little thing! She wished she'd left a tiny piece of biscuit on the dressing-table. It was awful to think of it not finding anything. What would it do?

"I can't think how they manage to live at all," she said slowly.

"Who?" demanded Josephine.

And Constantia said more loudly than she meant to, "Mice."

Josephine was furious. "Oh, what nonsense, Con!" she said. "What have mice got to do with it? You're asleep."

"I don't think I am," said Constantia. She shut her eyes to make sure. She was.

Josephine arched her spine, pulled up her knees, folded her arms so that her fists came under her ears, and pressed her cheek hard against the pillow.

176.

The Daughters of the Late Colonel: II

Katherine Mansfield

Another thing which complicated matters was they had Nurse Andrews staying on with them that week. It was their own fault; they had asked her. It was Josephine's idea. On the morning—well, on the last morning, when the doctor had gone, Josephine had said to Constantia, "Don't you think it would be rather nice if we asked Nurse Andrews to stay on for a week as our guest?"

"Very nice," said Constantia.

"I thought," went on Josephine quickly, "I should just say this afternoon, after I've paid her, 'My sister and I would be very pleased, after all you've done for us, Nurse Andrews, if you would stay on for a week as our guest.' I'd have to put that in about being our guest in case—"

"Oh, but she could hardly expect to be paid!" cried Constantia.

"One never knows," said Josephine sagely.

Nurse Andrews had, of course, jumped at the idea. But it was a bother. It meant they had to have regular sit-down meals at the proper times, whereas if they'd been alone they could just have asked Kate if she wouldn't have minded bringing them a tray wherever they were. And meal-times now that the strain was over were rather a trial.

Nurse Andrews was simply fearful about butter. Really they couldn't help feeling that about butter, at least, she took advantage of their kindness. And she had that maddening habit of asking for just an inch more of bread to finish what she had on her plate, and then, at the last mouthful, absent-mindedly—of course it wasn't absent-mindedly—taking another helping. Josephine got very red when this happened, and she fastened her small, bead-like eyes on the tablecloth as if she saw a minute strange insect creeping through the web of it. But Constantia's long, pale face lengthened and set, and she gazed away—away—far over the desert, to where that line of camels unwound like a thread of wool…

"When I was with Lady Tukes," said Nurse Andrews, "she had such a dainty little contrayvance for the buttah. It was a silvah Cupid balanced on the—on the bordah of a glass dish, holding a tayny fork. And when you wanted some buttah you simply pressed his foot and he bent down and speared you a piece. It was quite a gayme."

Josephine could hardly bear that. But "I think those things are very extravagant" was all she said.

"But whey?" asked Nurse Andrews, beaming through her eyeglasses. "No one, surely, would take more buttah than one wanted—would one?"

"Ring, Con," cried Josephine. She couldn't trust herself to reply.

And proud young Kate, the enchanted princess, came in to see what the old tabbies wanted now. She snatched away their plates of mock something or other and slapped down a white, terrified blancmange.

"Jam, please, Kate," said Josephine kindly.

Kate knelt and burst open the sideboard, lifted the lid of the jam-pot, saw it was empty, put it on the table, and stalked off.

"I'm afraid," said Nurse Andrews a moment later, "there isn't any."

"Oh, what a bother!" said Josephine. She bit her lip. "What had we better do?"

Constantia looked dubious. "We can't disturb Kate again," she said softly.

Nurse Andrews waited, smiling at them both. Her eyes wandered, spying at everything behind her eyeglasses. Constantia in despair went back to her camels. Josephine frowned heavily—concentrated. If it hadn't been for this idiotic woman she and Con would, of course, have eaten their blancmange without. Suddenly the idea came.

"I know," she said. "Marmalade. There's some marmalade in the sideboard. Get it, Con."

"I hope," laughed Nurse Andrews—and her laugh was like a spoon tinkling against a medicine-glass—"I hope it's not very bittah marmalayde."

177.

The Daughters of the Late Colonel: III

Katherine Mansfield

But, after all, it was not long now, and then she'd be gone for good. And there was no getting over the fact that she had been very kind to father. She had nursed him day and night at the end. Indeed, both Constantia and Josephine felt privately she had rather overdone the not leaving him at the very last. For when they had gone in to say good-bye Nurse Andrews had sat beside his bed the whole time, holding his wrist and pretending to look at her watch. It couldn't have been necessary. It was so tactless, too. Supposing father had wanted to say something—something private to them. Not that he had. Oh, far from it! He lay there, purple, a dark, angry purple in the face, and never even looked at them when they came in. Then, as they were standing there, wondering what to do, he had suddenly opened one eye. Oh, what a difference it would have made, what a difference to their memory of him, how much easier to tell people about it, if he had only opened both! But no—one eye only. It glared at them a moment and then… went out.

178.

The Daughters of the Late Colonel: IV

Katherine Mansfield

It had made it very awkward for them when Mr. Farolles, of St. John's, called the same afternoon.

"The end was quite peaceful, I trust?" were the first words he said as he glided towards them through the dark drawing-room.

"Quite," said Josephine faintly. They both hung their heads. Both of them felt certain that eye wasn't at all a peaceful eye.

"Won't you sit down?" said Josephine.

"Thank you, Miss Pinner," said Mr. Farolles gratefully. He folded his coat-tails and began to lower himself into father's arm-chair, but just as he touched it he almost sprang up and slid into the next chair instead.

He coughed. Josephine clasped her hands; Constantia looked vague.

"I want you to feel, Miss Pinner," said Mr. Farolles, "and you, Miss Constantia, that I'm trying to be helpful. I want to be helpful to you both, if you will let me. These are the times," said Mr Farolles, very simply and earnestly, "when God means us to be helpful to one another."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Farolles," said Josephine and Constantia.

"Not at all," said Mr. Farolles gently. He drew his kid gloves through his fingers and leaned forward. "And if either of you would like a little Communion, either or both of you, here and now, you have only to tell me. A little Communion is often very help—a great comfort," he added tenderly.

But the idea of a little Communion terrified them. What! In the drawing-room by themselves—with no—no altar or anything! The piano would be much too high, thought Constantia, and Mr. Farolles could not possibly lean over it with the chalice. And Kate would be sure to come bursting in and interrupt them, thought Josephine. And supposing the bell rang in the middle? It might be somebody important—about their mourning. Would they get up reverently and go out, or would they have to wait… in torture?

"Perhaps you will send round a note by your good Kate if you would care for it later," said Mr. Farolles.

"Oh yes, thank you very much!" they both said.

Mr. Farolles got up and took his black straw hat from the round table.

"And about the funeral," he said softly. "I may arrange that—as your dear father's old friend and yours, Miss Pinner—and Miss Constantia?"

Josephine and Constantia got up too.

"I should like it to be quite simple," said Josephine firmly, "and not too expensive. At the same time, I should like—"

"A good one that will last," thought dreamy Constantia, as if Josephine were buying a nightgown. But, of course, Josephine didn't say that. "One suitable to our father's position." She was very nervous.

"I'll run round to our good friend Mr. Knight," said Mr. Farolles soothingly. "I will ask him to come and see you. I am sure you will find him very helpful indeed."

179.

The Daughters of the Late Colonel: V

Katherine Mansfield

Well, at any rate, all that part of it was over, though neither of them could possibly believe that father was never coming back. Josephine had had a moment of absolute terror at the cemetery, while the coffin was lowered, to think that she and Constantia had done this thing without asking his permission. What would father say when he found out? For he was bound to find out sooner or later. He always did. “Buried. You two girls had me buried!” She heard his stick thumping. Oh, what would they say? What possible excuse could they make? It sounded such an appallingly heartless thing to do. Such a wicked advantage to take of a person because he happened to be helpless at the moment. The other people seemed to treat it all as a matter of course. They were strangers; they couldn’t be expected to understand that father was the very last person for such a thing to happen to. No, the entire blame for it all would fall on her and Constantia. And the expense, she thought, stepping into the tight-buttoned cab. When she had to show him the bills. What would he say then?

She heard him absolutely roaring. “And do you expect me to pay for this gimcrack excursion of yours?”

“Oh,” groaned poor Josephine aloud, “we shouldn’t have done it, Con!”

And Constantia, pale as a lemon in all that blackness, said in a frightened whisper, “Done what, Jug?”

“Let them bu-bury father like that,” said Josephine, breaking down and crying into her new, queer-smelling mourning handkerchief.

“But what else could we have done?” asked Constantia wonderingly. “We couldn’t have kept him, Jug—we couldn’t have kept him unburied. At any rate, not in a flat that size.”

Josephine blew her nose; the cab was dreadfully stuffy.

“I don’t know,” she said forlornly. “It is all so dreadful. I feel we ought to have tried to, just for a time at least. To make perfectly sure. One thing’s certain”—and her tears sprang out again—”father will never forgive us for this—never!”

180.

The Daughters of the Late Colonel: VI

Katherine Mansfield

Father would never forgive them. That was what they felt more than ever when, two mornings later, they went into his room to go through his things. They had discussed it quite calmly. It was even down on Josephine's list of things to be done. "Go through father's things and settle about them." But that was a very different matter from saying after breakfast:

"Well, are you ready, Con?"

"Yes, Jug—when you are."

"Then I think we'd better get it over."

It was dark in the hall. It had been a rule for years never to disturb father in the morning, whatever happened. And now they were going to open the door without knocking even… Constantia's eyes were enormous at the idea; Josephine felt weak in the knees.

"You—you go first," she gasped, pushing Constantia.

But Constantia said, as she always had said on those occasions, "No, Jug, that's not fair. You're the eldest."

Josephine was just going to say—what at other times she wouldn't have owned to for the world—what she kept for her very last weapon, "But you're the tallest," when they noticed that the kitchen door was open, and there stood Kate…

"Very stiff," said Josephine, grasping the doorhandle and doing her best to turn it. As if anything ever deceived Kate!

It couldn't be helped. That girl was… Then the door was shut behind them, but—but they weren't in father's room at all. They might have suddenly walked through the wall by mistake into a different flat altogether. Was the door just behind them? They were too frightened to look. Josephine knew that if it was it was holding itself tight shut; Constantia felt that, like the doors in dreams, it hadn't any handle at all. It was the coldness which made it so awful. Or the whiteness—which? Everything was covered. The blinds were down, a cloth hung over the mirror, a sheet hid the bed; a huge fan of white paper filled the fireplace. Constantia timidly put out her hand; she almost expected a snowflake to fall. Josephine felt a queer tingling in her nose, as if her nose was freezing. Then a cab klop-klopped over the cobbles below, and the quiet seemed to shake into little pieces.

"I had better pull up a blind," said Josephine bravely.

"Yes, it might be a good idea," whispered Constantia.

They only gave the blind a touch, but it flew up and the cord flew after, rolling round the blind-stick, and the little tassel tapped as if trying to get free. That was too much for Constantia.

"Don't you think—don't you think we might put it off for another day?" she whispered.

"Why?" snapped Josephine, feeling, as usual, much better now that she knew for certain that Constantia was terrified. "It's got to be done. But I do wish you wouldn't whisper, Con."

"I didn't know I was whispering," whispered Constantia.

"And why do you keep staring at the bed?" said Josephine, raising her voice almost defiantly. "There's nothing on the bed."

"Oh, Jug, don't say so!" said poor Connie. "At any rate, not so loudly."

Josephine felt herself that she had gone too far. She took a wide swerve over to the chest of drawers, put out her hand, but quickly drew it back again.

"Connie!" she gasped, and she wheeled round and leaned with her back against the chest of drawers.

"Oh, Jug—what?"

Josephine could only glare. She had the most extraordinary feeling that she had just escaped something simply awful. But how could she explain to Constantia that father was in the chest of drawers? He was in the top drawer with his handkerchiefs and neckties, or in the next with his shirts and pyjamas, or in the lowest of all with his suits. He was watching there, hidden away—just behind the door-handle—ready to spring.

She pulled a funny old-fashioned face at Constantia, just as she used to in the old days when she was going to cry.

"I can't open," she nearly wailed.

"No, don't, Jug," whispered Constantia earnestly. "It's much better not to. Don't let's open anything. At any rate, not for a long time."

"But—but it seems so weak," said Josephine, breaking down.

"But why not be weak for once, Jug?" argued Constantia, whispering quite fiercely. "If it is weak." And her pale stare flew from the locked writing-table—so safe—to the huge glittering wardrobe, and she began to breathe in a queer, panting away. "Why shouldn't we be weak for once in our lives, Jug? It's quite excusable. Let's be weak—be weak, Jug. It's much nicer to be weak than to be strong."

And then she did one of those amazingly bold things that she'd done about twice before in their lives: she marched over to the wardrobe, turned the key, and took it out of the lock. Took it out of the lock and held it up to Josephine, showing Josephine by her extraordinary smile that she knew what she'd done—she'd risked deliberately father being in there among his overcoats.

If the huge wardrobe had lurched forward, had crashed down on Constantia, Josephine wouldn't have been surprised. On the contrary, she would have thought it the only suitable thing to happen. But nothing happened. Only the room seemed quieter than ever, and the bigger flakes of cold air fell on Josephine's shoulders and knees. She began to shiver.

"Come, Jug," said Constantia, still with that awful callous smile, and Josephine followed just as she had that last time, when Constantia had pushed Benny into the round pond.

181.

The Daughters of the Late Colonel: VII

Katherine Mansfield

But the strain told on them when they were back in the dining-room. They sat down, very shaky, and looked at each other.

"I don't feel I can settle to anything," said Josephine, "until I've had something. Do you think we could ask Kate for two cups of hot water?"

"I really don't see why we shouldn't," said Constantia carefully. She was quite normal again. "I won't ring. I'll go to the kitchen door and ask her."

"Yes, do," said Josephine, sinking down into a chair. "Tell her, just two cups, Con, nothing else—on a tray."

"She needn't even put the jug on, need she?" said Constantia, as though Kate might very well complain if the jug had been there.

"Oh no, certainly not! The jug's not at all necessary. She can pour it direct out of the kettle," cried Josephine, feeling that would be a labour-saving indeed.

Their cold lips quivered at the greenish brims. Josephine curved her small red hands round the cup; Constantia sat up and blew on the wavy steam, making it flutter from one side to the other.

"Speaking of Benny," said Josephine.

And though Benny hadn't been mentioned Constantia immediately looked as though he had.

"He'll expect us to send him something of father's, of course. But it's so difficult to know what to send to Ceylon."

"You mean things get unstuck so on the voyage," murmured Constantia.

"No, lost," said Josephine sharply. "You know there's no post. Only runners."

Both paused to watch a black man in white linen drawers running through the pale fields for dear life, with a large brown-paper parcel in his hands. Josephine's black man was tiny; he scurried along glistening like an ant. But there was something blind and tireless about Constantia's tall, thin fellow, which made him, she decided, a very unpleasant person indeed… On the veranda, dressed all in white and wearing a cork helmet, stood Benny. His right hand shook up and down, as father's did when he was impatient. And behind him, not in the least interested, sat Hilda, the unknown sister-in-law. She swung in a cane rocker and flicked over the leaves of the "Tatler."

"I think his watch would be the most suitable present," said Josephine.

Constantia looked up; she seemed surprised.

"Oh, would you trust a gold watch to a native?"

"But of course, I'd disguise it," said Josephine. "No one would know it was a watch." She liked the idea of having to make a parcel such a curious shape that no one could possibly guess what it was. She even thought for a moment of hiding the watch in a narrow cardboard corset-box that she'd kept by her for a long time, waiting for it to come in for something. It was such beautiful, firm cardboard. But, no, it wouldn't be appropriate for this occasion. It had lettering on it: "Medium Women's 28. Extra Firm Busks." It would be almost too much of a surprise for Benny to open that and find father's watch inside.

"And of course it isn't as though it would be going—ticking, I mean," said Constantia, who was still

thinking of the native love of jewellery. “At least,” she added, “it would be very strange if after all that time it was.”

182.

The Daughters of the Late Colonel: VIII

Katherine Mansfield

Josephine made no reply. She had flown off on one of her tangents. She had suddenly thought of Cyril. Wasn't it more usual for the only grandson to have the watch? And then dear Cyril was so appreciative, and a gold watch meant so much to a young man. Benny, in all probability, had quite got out of the habit of watches; men so seldom wore waistcoats in those hot climates. Whereas Cyril in London wore them from year's end to year's end. And it would be so nice for her and Constantia, when he came to tea, to know it was there. "I see you've got on grandfather's watch, Cyril." It would be somehow so satisfactory.

Dear boy! What a blow his sweet, sympathetic little note had been! Of course they quite understood; but it was most unfortunate.

"It would have been such a point, having him," said Josephine.

"And he would have enjoyed it so," said Constantia, not thinking what she was saying.

However, as soon as he got back he was coming to tea with his aunties. Cyril to tea was one of their rare treats.

"Now, Cyril, you mustn't be frightened of our cakes. Your Auntie Con and I bought them at Buszard's this morning. We know what a man's appetite is. So don't be ashamed of making a good tea."

Josephine cut recklessly into the rich dark cake that stood for her winter gloves or the soling and heeling of Constantia's only respectable shoes. But Cyril was most unmanlike in appetite.

"I say, Aunt Josephine, I simply can't. I've only just had lunch, you know."

"Oh, Cyril, that can't be true! It's after four," cried Josephine. Constantia sat with her knife poised over the chocolate-roll.

"It is, all the same," said Cyril. "I had to meet a man at Victoria, and he kept me hanging about till… there was only time to get lunch and to come on here. And he gave me—phew"—Cyril put his hand to his forehead—"a terrific blow-out," he said.

It was disappointing—to-day of all days. But still he couldn't be expected to know.

"But you'll have a meringue, won't you, Cyril?" said Aunt Josephine. "These meringues were bought specially for you. Your dear father was so fond of them. We were sure you are, too."

"I am, Aunt Josephine," cried Cyril ardently. "Do you mind if I take half to begin with?"

"Not at all, dear boy; but we mustn't let you off with that."

"Is your dear father still so fond of meringues?" asked Auntie Con gently. She winced faintly as she broke through the shell of hers.

"Well, I don't quite know, Auntie Con," said Cyril breezily.

At that they both looked up.

"Don't know?" almost snapped Josephine. "Don't know a thing like that about your own father, Cyril?"

"Surely," said Auntie Con softly.

Cyril tried to laugh it off. "Oh, well," he said, "it's such a long time since—" He faltered. He stopped. Their faces were too much for him.

"Even so," said Josephine.

And Auntie Con looked.

Cyril put down his teacup. "Wait a bit," he cried. "Wait a bit, Aunt Josephine. What am I thinking of?"

He looked up. They were beginning to brighten. Cyril slapped his knee.

"Of course," he said, "it was meringues. How could I have forgotten? Yes, Aunt Josephine, you're perfectly right. Father's most frightfully keen on meringues."

They didn't only beam. Aunt Josephine went scarlet with pleasure; Auntie Con gave a deep, deep sigh.

"And now, Cyril, you must come and see father," said Josephine. "He knows you were coming to-day."

"Right," said Cyril, very firmly and heartily. He got up from his chair; suddenly he glanced at the clock.

"I say, Auntie Con, isn't your clock a bit slow? I've got to meet a man at—at Paddington just after five. I'm afraid I shan't be able to stay very long with grandfather."

"Oh, he won't expect you to stay very long!" said Aunt Josephine.

Constantia was still gazing at the clock. She couldn't make up her mind if it was fast or slow. It was one or the other, she felt almost certain of that. At any rate, it had been.

Cyril still lingered. "Aren't you coming along, Auntie Con?"

"Of course," said Josephine, "we shall all go. Come on, Con."

183.

The Daughters of the Late Colonel: IX

Katherine Mansfield

They knocked at the door, and Cyril followed his aunts into grandfather's hot, sweetish room.

"Come on," said Grandfather Pinner. "Don't hang about. What is it? What've you been up to?"

He was sitting in front of a roaring fire, clasping his stick. He had a thick rug over his knees. On his lap there lay a beautiful pale yellow silk handkerchief.

"It's Cyril, father," said Josephine shyly. And she took Cyril's hand and led him forward.

"Good afternoon, grandfather," said Cyril, trying to take his hand out of Aunt Josephine's. Grandfather Pinner shot his eyes at Cyril in the way he was famous for. Where was Auntie Con? She stood on the other side of Aunt Josephine; her long arms hung down in front of her; her hands were clasped. She never took her eyes off grandfather.

"Well," said Grandfather Pinner, beginning to thump, "what have you got to tell me?"

What had he, what had he got to tell him? Cyril felt himself smiling like a perfect imbecile. The room was stifling, too.

But Aunt Josephine came to his rescue. She cried brightly, "Cyril says his father is still very fond of meringues, father dear."

"Eh?" said Grandfather Pinner, curving his hand like a purple meringue-shell over one ear.

Josephine repeated, "Cyril says his father is still very fond of meringues."

"Can't hear," said old Colonel Pinner. And he waved Josephine away with his stick, then pointed with his stick to Cyril. "Tell me what she's trying to say," he said.

(My God!) "Must I?" said Cyril, blushing and staring at Aunt Josephine.

"Do, dear," she smiled. "It will please him so much."

"Come on, out with it!" cried Colonel Pinner testily, beginning to thump again.

And Cyril leaned forward and yelled, "Father's still very fond of meringues."

At that Grandfather Pinner jumped as though he had been shot.

"Don't shout!" he cried. "What's the matter with the boy? Meringues! What about 'em?"

"Oh, Aunt Josephine, must we go on?" groaned Cyril desperately.

"It's quite all right, dear boy," said Aunt Josephine, as though he and she were at the dentist's together. "He'll understand in a minute." And she whispered to Cyril, "He's getting a bit deaf, you know." Then she leaned forward and really bawled at Grandfather Pinner, "Cyril only wanted to tell you, father dear, that his father is still very fond of meringues."

Colonel Pinner heard that time, heard and brooded, looking Cyril up and down.

"What an esstrordinary thing!" said old Grandfather Pinner. "What an esstrordinary thing to come all this way here to tell me!"

And Cyril felt it was.

"Yes, I shall send Cyril the watch," said Josephine.

"That would be very nice," said Constantia. "I seem to remember last time he came there was some little trouble about the time."

184.

The Daughters of the Late Colonel: X

Katherine Mansfield

They were interrupted by Kate bursting through the door in her usual fashion, as though she had discovered some secret panel in the wall.

"Fried or boiled?" asked the bold voice.

Fried or boiled? Josephine and Constantia were quite bewildered for the moment. They could hardly take it in.

"Fried or boiled what, Kate?" asked Josephine, trying to begin to concentrate.

Kate gave a loud sniff. "Fish."

"Well, why didn't you say so immediately?" Josephine reproached her gently. "How could you expect us to understand, Kate? There are a great many things in this world you know, which are fried or boiled." And after such a display of courage she said quite brightly to Constantia, "Which do you prefer, Con?"

"I think it might be nice to have it fried," said Constantia. "On the other hand, of course, boiled fish is very nice. I think I prefer both equally well… Unless you… In that case—"

"I shall fry it," said Kate, and she bounced back, leaving their door open and slamming the door of her kitchen.

Josephine gazed at Constantia; she raised her pale eyebrows until they rippled away into her pale hair. She got up. She said in a very lofty, imposing way, "Do you mind following me into the drawing-room, Constantia? I've got something of great importance to discuss with you."

For it was always to the drawing-room they retired when they wanted to talk over Kate.

Josephine closed the door meaningly. "Sit down, Constantia," she said, still very grand. She might have been receiving Constantia for the first time. And Con looked round vaguely for a chair, as though she felt indeed quite a stranger.

"Now the question is," said Josephine, bending forward, "whether we shall keep her or not."

"That is the question," agreed Constantia.

"And this time," said Josephine firmly, "we must come to a definite decision."

Constantia looked for a moment as though she might begin going over all the other times, but she pulled herself together and said, "Yes, Jug."

"You see, Con," explained Josephine, "everything is so changed now." Constantia looked up quickly. "I mean," went on Josephine, "we're not dependent on Kate as we were." And she blushed faintly. "There's not father to cook for."

"That is perfectly true," agreed Constantia. "Father certainly doesn't want any cooking now, whatever else—"

Josephine broke in sharply, "You're not sleepy, are you, Con?"

"Sleepy, Jug?" Constantia was wide-eyed.

"Well, concentrate more," said Josephine sharply, and she returned to the subject. "What it comes to is, if we did"—and this she barely breathed, glancing at the door—"give Kate notice"—she raised her voice again—"we could manage our own food."

"Why not?" cried Constantia. She couldn't help smiling. The idea was so exciting. She clasped her hands. "What should we live on, Jug?"

"Oh, eggs in various forms!" said Jug, lofty again. "And, besides, there are all the cooked foods."

"But I've always heard," said Constantia, "they are considered so very expensive."

"Not if one buys them in moderation," said Josephine. But she tore herself away from this fascinating bypath and dragged Constantia after her.

"What we've got to decide now, however, is whether we really do trust Kate or not."

Constantia leaned back. Her flat little laugh flew from her lips.

"Isn't it curious, Jug," said she, "that just on this one subject I've never been able to quite make up my mind?"

185.

The Daughters of the Late Colonel: XI

Katherine Mansfield

She never had. The whole difficulty was to prove anything. How did one prove things, how could one? Suppose Kate had stood in front of her and deliberately made a face. Mightn't she very well have been in pain? Wasn't it impossible, at any rate, to ask Kate if she was making a face at her? If Kate answered "No"—and, of course, she would say "No"—what a position! How undignified! Then again Constantia suspected, she was almost certain that Kate went to her chest of drawers when she and Josephine were out, not to take things but to spy. Many times she had come back to find her amethyst cross in the most unlikely places, under her lace ties or on top of her evening Bertha. More than once she had laid a trap for Kate. She had arranged things in a special order and then called Josephine to witness.

"You see, Jug?"

"Quite, Con."

"Now we shall be able to tell."

But, oh dear, when she did go to look, she was as far off from a proof as ever! If anything was displaced, it might so very well have happened as she closed the drawer; a jolt might have done it so easily.

"You come, Jug, and decide. I really can't. It's too difficult."

But after a pause and a long glare Josephine would sigh, "Now you've put the doubt into my mind, Con, I'm sure I can't tell myself."

"Well, we can't postpone it again," said Josephine. "If we postpone it this time—"

186.

The Daughters of the Late Colonel: XII

Katherine Mansfield

But at that moment in the street below a barrel-organ struck up. Josephine and Constantia sprang to their feet together.

"Run, Con," said Josephine. "Run quickly. There's sixpence on the—"

Then they remembered. It didn't matter. They would never have to stop the organ-grinder again. Never again would she and Constantia be told to make that monkey take his noise somewhere else. Never would sound that loud, strange bellow when father thought they were not hurrying enough. The organ-grinder might play there all day and the stick would not thump.

"It never will thump again,   It never will thump again,

played the barrel-organ.

What was Constantia thinking? She had such a strange smile; she looked different. She couldn't be going to cry.

"Jug, Jug," said Constantia softly, pressing her hands together. "Do you know what day it is? It's Saturday. It's a week to-day, a whole week."

"A week since father died,   A week since father died,"

cried the barrel-organ. And Josephine, too, forgot to be practical and sensible; she smiled faintly, strangely. On the Indian carpet there fell a square of sunlight, pale red; it came and went and came—and stayed, deepened—until it shone almost golden.

"The sun's out," said Josephine, as though it really mattered.

A perfect fountain of bubbling notes shook from the barrel-organ, round, bright notes, carelessly scattered.

Constantia lifted her big, cold hands as if to catch them, and then her hands fell again. She walked over to the mantelpiece to her favourite Buddha. And the stone and gilt image, whose smile always gave her such a queer feeling, almost a pain and yet a pleasant pain, seemed to-day to be more than smiling. He knew something; he had a secret. "I know something that you don't know," said her Buddha. Oh, what was it, what could it be? And yet she had always felt there was… something.

The sunlight pressed through the windows, thieved its way in, flashed its light over the furniture and the photographs. Josephine watched it. When it came to mother's photograph, the enlargement over the piano, it lingered as though puzzled to find so little remained of mother, except the earrings shaped like tiny pagodas and a black feather boa. Why did the photographs of dead people always fade so? wondered Josephine. As soon as a person was dead their photograph died too. But, of course, this one of mother was very old. It was thirty-five years old. Josephine remembered standing on a chair and pointing out that feather boa to Constantia and telling her that it was a snake that had killed their mother in Ceylon… Would everything have been different if mother hadn't died? She didn't see why. Aunt Florence had lived with them until they had left school, and they had moved three times and had their yearly holiday and… and there'd been changes of servants, of course.

Some little sparrows, young sparrows they sounded, chirped on the window-ledge. "Yeep—eyeep—yeep." But Josephine felt they were not sparrows, not on the window-ledge. It was

inside her, that queer little crying noise. “Yeep—eyeep—yeep.” Ah, what was it crying, so weak and forlorn?

If mother had lived, might they have married? But there had been nobody for them to marry. There had been father’s Anglo-Indian friends before he quarrelled with them. But after that she and Constantia never met a single man except clergymen. How did one meet men? Or even if they’d met them, how could they have got to know men well enough to be more than strangers? One read of people having adventures, being followed, and so on. But nobody had ever followed Constantia and her. Oh yes, there had been one year at Eastbourne a mysterious man at their boarding-house who had put a note on the jug of hot water outside their bedroom door! But by the time Connie had found it the steam had made the writing too faint to read; they couldn’t even make out to which of them it was addressed. And he had left next day. And that was all. The rest had been looking after father, and at the same time keeping out of father’s way. But now? But now? The thieving sun touched Josephine gently. She lifted her face. She was drawn over to the window by gentle beams…

Until the barrel-organ stopped playing Constantia stayed before the Buddha, wondering, but not as usual, not vaguely. This time her wonder was like longing. She remembered the times she had come in here, crept out of bed in her nightgown when the moon was full, and lain on the floor with her arms outstretched, as though she was crucified. Why? The big, pale moon had made her do it. The horrible dancing figures on the carved screen had leered at her and she hadn’t minded. She remembered too how, whenever they were at the seaside, she had gone off by herself and got as close to the sea as she could, and sung something, something she had made up, while she gazed all over that restless water. There had been this other life, running out, bringing things home in bags, getting things on approval, discussing them with Jug, and taking them back to get more things on approval, and arranging father’s trays and trying not to annoy father. But it all seemed to have happened in a kind of tunnel. It wasn’t real. It was only when she came out of the tunnel into the moonlight or by the sea or into a thunderstorm that she really felt herself. What did it mean? What was it she was always wanting? What did it all lead to? Now? Now?

She turned away from the Buddha with one of her vague gestures. She went over to where Josephine was standing. She wanted to say something to Josephine, something frightfully important, about—about the future and what…

“Don’t you think perhaps—” she began.

But Josephine interrupted her. “I was wondering if now—” she murmured. They stopped; they waited for each other.

“Go on, Con,” said Josephine.

“No, no, Jug; after you,” said Constantia.

“No, say what you were going to say. You began,” said Josephine.

“I… I’d rather hear what you were going to say first,” said Constantia.

“Don’t be absurd, Con.”

“Really, Jug.”

“Connie!”

“Oh, Jug!”

A pause. Then Constantia said faintly, “I can’t say what I was going to say, Jug, because I’ve forgotten what it was… that I was going to say.”

Josephine was silent for a moment. She stared at a big cloud where the sun had been. Then she replied shortly, “I’ve forgotten too.”

187.

The Fly

Katherine Mansfield

"Y'are very snug in here," piped old Mr. Woodifield, and he peered out of the great, green-leather armchair by his friend the boss's desk as a baby peers out of its pram. His talk was over; it was time for him to be off. But he did not want to go. Since he had retired, since his…stroke, the wife and the girls kept him boxed up in the house every day of the week except Tuesday. On Tuesday he was dressed and brushed and allowed to cut back to the City[1] for the day. Though what he did there the wife and girls couldn't imagine. Made a nuisance of himself to his friends, they supposed….Well, perhaps so. All the same, we cling to our last pleasures as the tree clings to its last leaves. So there sat old Woodifield, smoking a cigar and staring almost greedily at the boss, who rolled in his office chair, stout, rosy, five years older than he, and still going strong, still at the helm. It did one good to see him.

Wistfully, admiringly, the old voice added, "It's snug in here, upon my word!"

"Yes, it's comfortable enough," agreed the boss, and he flipped the *Financial Times* with a paper-knife. As a matter of fact he was proud of his room; he liked to have it admired, especially by old Woodifield. It gave him a feeling of deep, solid satisfaction to be planted there in the midst of it in full view of that frail old figure in the muffler.

"I've had it done up lately," he explained, as he had explained for the past—how many?—weeks. "New carpet," and he pointed to the bright red carpet with a pattern of large white rings. "New furniture," and he nodded towards the massive bookcase and the table with legs like twisted treacle. "Electric heating!" He waved almost exultantly towards the five transparent, pearly sausages glowing so softly in the tilted copper pan.

But he did not draw old Woodifield's attention to the photograph over the table of a grave-looking boy in uniform standing in one of those spectral photographers' parks with photographers' storm-clouds behind him. It was not new. It had been there for over six years.

"There was something I wanted to tell you," said old Woodifield, and his eyes grew dim remembering. "Now what was it? I had it in my mind when I started out this morning." His hands began to tremble, and patches of red showed above his beard.

Poor old chap, he's on his last pins, thought the boss. And, feeling kindly, he winked at the old man, and said jokingly, "I tell you what. I've got a little drop of something here that'll do you good before you go out into the cold again. It's beautiful stuff. It wouldn't hurt a child." He took a key off his watch-chain, unlocked a cupboard below his desk, and drew forth a dark, squat bottle. "That's the medicine," said he. "And the man from whom I got it told me on the strict Q.T[2]. it came from the cellars at Windor Castle[3]."

Old Woodifield's mouth fell open at the sight. He couldn't have looked more surprised if the boss had produced a rabbit.

1. Chief financial and business district of London, usually capitalized so as to distinguish it from more general reference to the city of London. It is known colloquially as "the Square Mile."
2. Abbreviation for "quiet", meaning "secret" or "hush-hush."
3. A royal residence in Windsor in the county of Berkshire, roughly 34 kilometres from London.

"It's whisky, ain't it?" he piped feebly.

The boss turned the bottle and lovingly showed him the label. Whisky it was.

"D'you know," said he, peering up at the boss wonderingly, "they won't let me touch it at home." And he looked as though he was going to cry.

"Ah, that's where we know a bit more than the ladies," cried the boss, swooping across for two tumblers that stood on the table with the water-bottle, and pouring a generous finger into each. "Drink it down. It'll do you good. And don't put any water with it. It's sacrilege to tamper with stuff like this. Ah!" He tossed off his, pulled out his handkerchief, hastily wiped his moustaches, and cocked an eye at old Woodifield, who was rolling his in his chaps.

The old man swallowed, was silent a moment, and then said faintly, "It's nutty!"

But it warmed him; it crept into his chill old brain—he remembered.

"That was it," he said, heaving himself out of his chair. "I thought you'd like to know. The girls were in Belgium[4] last week having a look at poor Reggie's grave, and they happened to come across your boy's. They're quite near each other, it seems."

Old Woodifield paused, but the boss made no reply. Only a quiver in his eyelids showed that he heard.

"The girls were delighted with the way the place is kept," piped the old voice. "Beautifully looked after. Couldn't be better if they were at home. You've not been across, have yer?"

"No, no!" For various reasons the boss had not been across.

"There's miles of it," quavered old Woodifield, "and it's all as neat as a garden. Flowers growing on all the graves. Nice broad paths." It was plain from his voice how much he liked a nice broad path.

The pause came again. Then the old man brightened wonderfully.

"D'you know what the hotel made the girls pay for a pot of jam?" he piped. "Ten francs! Robbery, I call it. It was a little pot, so Gertrude says, no bigger than a half-crown. And she hadn't taken more than a spoonful when they charged her ten francs. Gertrude brought the pot away with her to teach 'em a lesson. Quite right, too; it's trading on our feelings. They think because we're over there having a look round we're ready to pay anything. That's what it is." And he turned towards the door.

"Quite right, quite right!" cried the boss, though what was quite right he hadn't the least idea. He came round by his desk, followed the shuffling footsteps to the door, and saw the old fellow out. Woodifield was gone.

For a long moment the boss stayed, staring at nothing, while the grey-haired office messenger, watching him, dodged in and out of his cubby-hole like a dog that expects to be taken for a run. Then: "I'll see nobody for half an hour, Macey," said the boss. "Understand? Nobody at all."

"Very good, sir."

The door shut, the firm heavy steps recrossed the bright carpet, the fat body plumped down in the spring chair, and leaning forward, the boss covered his face with his hands. He wanted, he intended, he had arranged to weep….

It had been a terrible shock to him when old Woodifield sprang that remark upon him about the boy's grave. It was exactly as though the earth had opened and he had seen the boy lying there with Woodifield's girls staring down at him. For it was strange. Although over six years had passed away, the boss never thought of the boy except as lying unchanged, unblemished in his uniform, asleep for ever. "My son!" groaned the boss. But no tears came yet. In the past, in the first few months and even years after the boy's death, he had only to say those words to be overcome by such grief that nothing short of a violent fit of weeping could relieve him. Time, he had declared then, he had told everybody, could make no difference. Other men perhaps might recover, might live their loss down, but not he. How was it possible? His boy was an only son. Ever since his birth the boss had worked at building up this business

4. Site of many World War I battles and military cemeteries.

for him; it had no other meaning if it was not for the boy. Life itself had come to have no other meaning. How on earth could he have slaved, denied himself, kept going all those years without the promise for ever before him of the boy's stepping into his shoes and carrying on where he left off?

And that promise had been so near being fulfilled. The boy had been in the office learning the ropes for a year before the war. Every morning they had started off together; they had come back by the same train. And what congratulations he had received as the boy's father! No wonder; he had taken to it marvellously. As to his popularity with the staff, every man jack of them down to old Macey couldn't make enough of the boy. And he wasn't the least spoilt. No, he was just his bright natural self, with the right word for everybody, with that boyish look and his habit of saying, "Simply splendid!"

But all that was over and done with as though it never had been. The day had come when Macey had handed him the telegram that brought the whole place crashing about his head. "Deeply regret to inform you…" And he had left the office a broken man, with his life in ruins.

Six years ago, six years….How quickly time passed! It might have happened yesterday. The boss took his hands from his face; he was puzzled. Something seemed to be wrong with him. He wasn't feeling as he wanted to feel. He decided to get up and have a look at the boy's photograph. But it wasn't a favourite photograph of his; the expression was unnatural. It was cold, even stern-looking. The boy had never looked like that.

At that moment the boss noticed that a fly had fallen into his broad inkpot, and was trying feebly but deperately to clamber out again. Help! help! said those struggling legs. But the sides of the inkpot were wet and slippery; it fell back again and began to swim. The boss took up a pen, picked the fly out of the ink, and shook it on to a piece of blotting-paper. For a fraction of a second it lay still on the dark patch that oozed round it. Then the front legs waved, took hold, and, pulling its small, sodden body up, it began the immense task of cleaning the ink from its wings. Over and under, over and under, went a leg along a wing, as the stone goes over and under the scythe. Then there was a pause, while the fly, seeming to stand on the tips of its toes, tried to expand first one wing and then the other. It succeeded at last, and, sitting down, it began, like a minute cat, to clean its face. Now one could imagine that the little front legs rubbed against each other lightly, joyfully. The horrible danger was over; it had escaped; it was ready for life again.

But just then the boss had an idea. He plunged his pen back into the ink, leaned his thick wrist on the blotting-paper, and as the fly tried its wings down came a great heavy blot. What would it make of that? What indeed! The little beggar seemed absolutely cowed, stunned, and afraid to move because of what would happen next. But then, as if painfully, it dragged itself forward. The front legs waved, caught hold, and, more slowly this time, the task began from the beginning.

He's a plucky little devil, thought the boss, and he felt a real admiration for the fly's courage. That was the way to tackle things; that was the right spirit. Never say die; it was only a question of…But the fly had again finished its laborious task, and the boss had just time to refill his pen, to shake fair and square on the new-cleaned body yet another dark drop. What about it this time? A painful moment of suspense followed. But behold, the front legs were again waving; the boss felt a rush of relief. He leaned over the fly and said to it tenderly, "You artful little b…" And he actually had the brilliant notion of breathing on it to help the drying process. All the same, there was something timid and weak about its efforts now, and the boss decided that this time should be the last, as he dipped the pen deep into the inkpot.

It was. The last blot fell on the soaked blotting-paper, and the draggled fly lay in it and did not stir. The back legs were stuck to the body; the front legs were not to be seen.

"Come on," said the boss. "Look sharp!" And he stirred it with his pen— in vain. Nothing happened or was likely to happen. The fly was dead.

The boss lifted the corpse on the end of the paper-knife and flung it into the waste-paper basket. But

such a grinding feeling of wretchedness seized him that he felt positively frightened. He started forward and pressed the bell for Macey.

"Bring me some fresh blotting-paper," he said sternly,"and look sharp about it." And while the old dog padded away he fell to wondering what it was he had been thinking about before. What was it? It was…He took out his handkerchief and passed it inside his collar. For the life of him he could not remember.

188.

A Cup of Tea

Katherine Mansfield

Rosemary Fell was not exactly beautiful. No, you couldn't have called her beautiful. Pretty? Well, if you took her to pieces… But why be so cruel as to take anyone to pieces? She was young, brilliant, extremely modern, exquisitely well dressed, amazingly well read in the newest of the new books, and her parties were the most delicious mixture of the really important people and… artists—quaint creatures, discoveries of hers, some of them too terrifying for words, but others quite presentable and amusing.

Rosemary had been married two years. She had a duck of a boy[1]. No, not Peter—Michael. And her husband absolutely adored her. They were rich, really rich, not just comfortably well off, which is odious and stuffy and sounds like one's grandparents. But if Rosemary wanted to shop she would go to Paris as you and I would go to Bond Street.[2] If she wanted to buy flowers, the car pulled up at that perfect shop in Regent Street[3], and Rosemary inside the shop just gazed in her dazzled, rather exotic way, and said: "I want those and those and those. Give me four bunches of those. And that jar of roses. Yes, I'll have all the roses in the jar. No, no lilac. I hate lilac. It's got no shape." The attendant bowed and put the lilac out of sight, as though this was only too true; lilac was dreadfully shapeless. "Give me those stumpy little tulips. Those red and white ones." And she was followed to the car by a thin shop-girl staggering under an immense white paper armful that looked like a baby in long clothes….

One winter afternoon she had been buying something in a little antique shop in Curzon Street.[4] It was a shop she liked. For one thing, one usually had it to oneself. And then the man who kept it was ridiculously fond of serving her. He beamed whenever she came in. He clasped his hands; he was so gratified he could scarcely speak. Flattery, of course. All the same, there was something…

"You see, madam," he would explain in his low respectful tones, "I love my things. I would rather not part with them than sell them to someone who does not appreciate them, who has not that fine feeling which is so rare…" And, breathing deeply, he unrolled a tiny square of blue velvet and pressed it on the glass counter with his pale finger-tips.

To-day it was a little box. He had been keeping it for her. He had shown it to nobody as yet. An exquisite little enamel box with a glaze so fine it looked as though it had been baked in cream. On the lid a minute creature stood under a flowery tree, and a more minute creature still had her arms round his neck. Her hat, really no bigger than a geranium petal, hung from a branch; it had green ribbons. And there was a pink cloud like a watchful cherub floating above their heads. Rosemary took her hands out of her long gloves. She always took off her gloves to examine such things. Yes, she liked it very much. She loved it; it was a great duck. She must have it. And, turning the creamy box, opening and shutting it, she couldn't help noticing how charming her hands were against the blue velvet. The shopman, in some dim cavern of his mind, may have dared to think so too. For he took a pencil, leant over the counter, and

1. A term of endearment, often applied to things as well as people, "a duck of a fellow."
2. A smart and fashionable street in London's exclusive Mayfair district, known for shops that are both elegant and expensive.
3. Another major shopping street in London's West End.
4. Another fashionable street in Mayfair.

his pale, bloodless fingers crept timidly towards those rosy, flashing ones, as he murmured gently: “If I may venture to point out to madam, the flowers on the little lady’s bodice.”

“Charming!” Rosemary admired the flowers. But what was the price? For a moment the shopman did not seem to hear. Then a murmur reached her. “Twenty-eight guineas[5], madam.”

“Twenty-eight guineas.” Rosemary gave no sign. She laid the little box down; she buttoned her gloves again. Twenty-eight guineas. Even if one is rich… She looked vague. She stared at a plump tea-kettle like a plump hen above the shopman’s head, and her voice was dreamy as she answered: “Well, keep it for me—will you? I’ll…”

But the shopman had already bowed as though keeping it for her was all any human being could ask. He would be willing, of course, to keep it for her for ever.

The discreet door shut with a click. She was outside on the step, gazing at the winter afternoon. Rain was falling, and with the rain it seemed the dark came too, spinning down like ashes. There was a cold bitter taste in the air, and the new-lighted lamps looked sad. Sad were the lights in the houses opposite. Dimly they burned as if regretting something. And people hurried by, hidden under their hateful umbrellas. Rosemary felt a strange pang. She pressed her muff against her breast; she wished she had the little box, too, to cling to. Of course the car was there. She’d only to cross the pavement. But still she waited. There are moments, horrible moments in life, when one emerges from shelter and looks out, and it’s awful. One oughtn’t to give way to them. One ought to go home and have an extra-special tea. But at the very instant of thinking that, a young girl, thin, dark, shadowy—where had she come from?—was standing at Rosemary’s elbow and a voice like a sigh, almost like a sob, breathed: “Madam, may I speak to you a moment?”

“Speak to me?” Rosemary turned. She saw a little battered creature with enormous eyes, someone quite young, no older than herself, who clutched at her coat-collar with reddened hands, and shivered as though she had just come out of the water.

“M-madam, stammered the voice. Would you let me have the price of a cup of tea?”

“A cup of tea?” There was something simple, sincere in that voice; it wasn’t in the least the voice of a beggar. “Then have you no money at all?” asked Rosemary.

“None, madam,” came the answer.

“How extraordinary!” Rosemary peered through the dusk and the girl gazed back at her. How more than extraordinary! And suddenly it seemed to Rosemary such an adventure. It was like something out of a novel by Dostoevsky[6], this meeting in the dusk. Supposing she took the girl home? Supposing she did do one of those things she was always reading about or seeing on the stage, what would happen? It would be thrilling. And she heard herself saying afterwards to the amazement of her friends: “I simply took her home with me,” as she stepped forward and said to that dim person beside her: “Come home to tea with me.”

The girl drew back startled. She even stopped shivering for a moment. Rosemary put out a hand and touched her arm. “I mean it,” she said, smiling. And she felt how simple and kind her smile was. “Why won’t you? Do. Come home with me now in my car and have tea.”

“You—you don’t mean it, madam,” said the girl, and there was pain in her voice.

“But I do,” cried Rosemary. “I want you to. To please me. Come along.”

The girl put her fingers to her lips and her eyes devoured Rosemary. “You’re—you’re not taking me to the police station?” she stammered.

“The police station!” Rosemary laughed out. “Why should I be so cruel? No, I only want to make you warm and to hear—anything you care to tell me.”

5. An old British coin, valued at 21 shillings, or one shilling more than the pound, which was worth 20 shillings.
6. Influential novelist and philosopher. Novels such as *Crime and Punishment* (1866) and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) reflect the political, social and spiritual conflicts of his society.

Hungry people are easily led. The footman held the door of the car open, and a moment later they were skimming through the dusk.

"There!" said Rosemary. She had a feeling of triumph as she slipped her hand through the velvet strap. She could have said, "Now I've got you," as she gazed at the little captive she had netted. But of course she meant it kindly. Oh, more than kindly. She was going to prove to this girl that—wonderful things did happen in life, that—fairy godmothers were real, that—rich people had hearts, and that women were sisters. She turned impulsively, saying'. "Don't be frightened. After all, why shouldn't you come back with me? We're both women. If I'm the more fortunate, you ought to expect…"

But happily at that moment, for she didn't know how the sentence was going to end, the car stopped. The bell was rung, the door opened, and with a charming, protecting, almost embracing movement, Rosemary drew the other into the hall. Warmth, softness, light, a sweet scent, all those things so familiar to her she never even thought about them, she watched that other receive. It was fascinating. She was like the rich little girl in her nursery with all the cupboards to open, all the boxes to unpack.

"Come, come upstairs," said Rosemary, longing to begin to be generous. "Come up to my room." And, besides, she wanted to spare this poor little thing from being stared at by the servants; she decided as they mounted the stairs she would not even ring to Jeanne, but take off her things by herself. The great things were to be natural!

And "There!" cried Rosemary again, as they reached her beautiful big bedroom with the curtains drawn, the fire leaping on her wonderful lacquer furniture, her gold cushions and the primrose and blue rugs.

The girl stood just inside the door; she seemed dazed. But Rosemary didn't mind that.

"Come and sit down," she cried, dragging her big chair up to the fire, "in this comfy chair. Come and get warm. You look so dreadfully cold."

"I daren't, madam," said the girl, and she edged backwards.

"Oh, please,"—Rosemary ran forward—"you mustn't be frightened, you mustn't, really. Sit down, when I've taken off my things we shall go into the next room and have tea and be cozy. Why are you afraid?" And gently she half pushed the thin figure into its deep cradle.

But there was no answer. The girl stayed just as she had been put, with her hands by her sides and her mouth slightly open. To be quite sincere, she looked rather stupid. But Rosemary wouldn't acknowledge it. She leant over her, saying:

"Won't you take off your hat? Your pretty hair is all wet. And one is so much more comfortable without a hat, isn't one?"

There was a whisper that sounded like "Very good, madam," and the crushed hat was taken off.

"And let me help you off with your coat, too," said Rosemary.

The girl stood up. But she held on to the chair with one hand and let Rosemary pull. It was quite an effort. The other scarcely helped her at all. She seemed to stagger like a child, and the thought came and went through Rosemary's mind, that if people wanted helping they must respond a little, just a little, otherwise it became very difficult indeed. And what was she to do with the coat now? She left it on the floor, and the hat too. She was just going to take a cigarette off the mantelpiece when the girl said quickly, but so lightly and strangely: "I'm very sorry, madam, but I'm going to faint. I shall go off, madam, if I don't have something."

"Good heavens, how thoughtless I am!" Rosemary rushed to the bell.

"Tea! Tea at once! And some brandy immediately!"

The maid was gone again, but the girl almost cried out: "No, I don't want no brandy. I never drink brandy. It's a cup of tea I want, madam." And she burst into tears.

It was a terrible and fascinating moment. Rosemary knelt beside her chair.

"Don't cry, poor little thing," she said. "Don't cry." And she gave the other her lace handkerchief. She really was touched beyond words. She put her arm round those thin, bird-like shoulders.

Now at last the other forgot to be shy, forgot everything except that they were both women, and gasped out: "I can't go on no longer like this. I can't bear it. I can't bear it. I shall do away with myself. I can't bear no more."

"You shan't have to. I'll look after you. Don't cry any more. Don't you see what a good thing it was that you met me? We'll have tea and you'll tell me everything. And I shall arrange something. I promise. Do stop crying. It's so exhausting. Please!"

The other did stop just in time for Rosemary to get up before the tea came. She had the table placed between them. She plied the poor little creature with everything, all the sandwiches, all the bread and butter, and every time her cup was empty she filled it with tea, cream and sugar. People always said sugar was so nourishing. As for herself she didn't eat; she smoked and looked away tactfully so that the other should not be shy.

And really the effect of that slight meal was marvelous. When the tea-table was carried away a new being, a light, frail creature with tangled hair, dark lips, deep, lighted eyes, lay back in the big chair in a kind of sweet languor, looking at the blaze. Rosemary lit a fresh cigarette; it was time to begin.

"And when did you have your last meal?" she asked softly.

But at that moment the door-handle turned.

"Rosemary, may I come in?" It was Philip.

"Of course."

He came in. "Oh, I'm so sorry," he said, and stopped and stared.

"It's quite all right," said Rosemary, smiling. "This is my friend, Miss—"

"Smith, madam," said the languid figure, who was strangely still and unafraid.

"Smith," said Rosemary. "We are going to have a little talk."

"Oh yes," said Philip. "Quite," and his eye caught sight of the coat and hat on the floor. He came over to the fire and turned his back to it. "It's a beastly afternoon," he said curiously, still looking at that listless figure, looking at its hands and boots, and then at Rosemary again.

"Yes, isn't it?" said Rosemary enthusiastically. "Vile."

Philip smiled his charming smile. "As a matter of fact," said he, "I wanted you to come into the library for a moment. Would you? Will Miss Smith excuse us?"

The big eyes were raised to him, but Rosemary answered for her: "Of course she will." And they went out of the room together.

"I say," said Philip, when they were alone. "Explain. Who is she? What does it all mean?"

Rosemary, laughing, leaned against the door and said: "I picked her up in Curzon Street.

Really. She's a real pick-up. She asked me for the price of a cup of tea, and I brought her home with me. "

"But what on earth are you going to do with her?" cried Philip.

"Be nice to her," said Rosemary quickly. "Be frightfully nice to her. Look after her. I don't know how. We haven't talked yet. But show her—treat her—make her feel—"

"My darling girl," said Philip, "you're quite mad, you know. It simply can't be done."

"I knew you'd say that," retorted Rosemary. Why not? I want to. Isn't that a reason? And besides, one's always reading about these things. I decided—"

"But," said Philip slowly, and he cut the end of a cigar, "she's so astonishingly pretty."

"Pretty?" Rosemary was so surprised that she blushed. "Do you think so? I—I hadn't thought about it."

"Good Lord!" Philip struck a match. "She's absolutely lovely. Look again, my child. I was bowled over when I came into your room just now. However… I think you're making a ghastly mistake. Sorry,

darling, if I'm crude and all that. But let me know if Miss Smith is going to dine with us in time for me to look up *The Milliner's Gazette*."

"You absurd creature!" said Rosemary, and she went out of the library, but not back to her bedroom. She went to her writing-room and sat down at her desk. Pretty! Absolutely lovely! Bowled over! Her heart beat like a heavy bell. Pretty! Lovely! She drew her check-book towards her. But no, checks would be no use, of course. She opened a drawer and took out five pound notes, looked at them, put two back, and holding the three squeezed in her hand, she went back to her bedroom.

Half an hour later Philip was still in the library, when Rosemary came in.

"I only wanted to tell you," said she, and she leaned against the door again and looked at him with her dazzled exotic gaze, "Miss Smith won't dine with us to-night."

Philip put down the paper. "Oh, what's happened? Previous engagement?"

Rosemary came over and sat down on his knee. "She insisted on going," said she, "so I gave the poor little thing a present of money. I couldn't keep her against her will, could I?" she added softly.

Rosemary had just done her hair, darkened her eyes a little and put on her pearls. She put up her hands and touched Philip's cheeks.

"Do you like me?" said she, and her tone, sweet, husky, troubled him.

"I like you awfully," he said, and he held her tighter. "Kiss me."

There was a pause.

Then Rosemary said dreamily: "I saw a fascinating little box to-day. It cost twenty-eight guineas. May I have it?"

Philip jumped her on his knee. "You may, little wasteful one," said he.

But that was not really what Rosemary wanted to say.

"Philip," she whispered, and she pressed his head against her bosom, "am I pretty?"

189.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

Miss Brill

1. What might Miss Brill's fur wrap symbolize?
2. How does Miss Brill deal with reality?
3. What do we know about Miss Brill's life?
4. What details suggest that Miss Brill might be ill?
5. What is the main conflict in the story?
6. Miss Brill is the protagonist in the story. Is there an antagonist?
7. The cupboard as simile is used twice: first, at the end of the fifth paragraph, and next, in the last paragraph. Explain how the final cupboard simile differs from the first.
8. Does she experience an epiphany?

The Daughters of the Late Colonel

1. Both "Turn of the Screw" and "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" could be described as ghost stories, but they have different effects and intentions." Discuss.
2. What are some of the techniques Mansfield uses to convey the sisters' indecision?
3. Contrast the two sisters.
4. We learn more about the sisters by attending to what others think about them. How do the observations of Nurse Andrews, the minister, Kate, and Cyril help shape our conceptions of these sisters?
5. What are some of the ways that Mansfield conveys the power the Colonel still seems to have? How have the sisters shaped their identities around their father?
6. At the end of the story, does Mansfield suggest any growth for these characters?
7. Read the article, Colin Norman Essay, and then write an essay comparing the concept of Freudian repression in Joyce's "Eveline" and Mansfield's "The Daughters of the Late Colonel."

The Fly

1. Contrast Old Woodifield with his boss.
2. What do the two men have in common in their personal lives?
3. How would you describe the boss's reaction to the death of his son?
4. How does the office provide what is referred to in "A Cup of Tea" as a sense of shelter?
5. World War I is never specifically mentioned in the story. But in what way is this story about the war?
6. What does the fly symbolize? In Shakespeare's *King Lear*, the Duke of Gloucester says, "As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods, they kill us for their sport" (4.1). Do you think Mansfield had this quotation in mind? If so, what key event in her experience of the World War I might have influenced her possible allusion to Gloucester's lines?

A Cup of Tea

1. Discuss narrative point of view. Where does it shift (the narrator uses words Rosemary would use herself).
2. What are the main scenes in the story? What do the scenes have in common in terms of imagery?
3. Where in the story does Rosemary emerge from a sense of shelter?
4. What might the little box in the antique shop symbolize?
5. Does Rosemary truly believe that women are sisters?
6. In the second paragraph of the story, the narrator refers to Michael. Is Michael— "a duck of a boy"— her son?
7. Before Michael is mentioned, the narrator refers to Peter. Who might he be?

Resources

- A good online documentary on Katherine Mansfield.

QR Code Katherine Mansfield

- 15-minute film adaptation of Miss Brill: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-MoDs3HR1U

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?p=602

QR Code Miss Brill

- The Garden Party

QR Code The Garden Party

- View the short excerpt from the dramatized film biography, *Bliss: the Beginning of Katherine Mansfield*.

QR Code Bliss

- Monograph on Mansfield's Representation of single women.

XXVII

Aldous Huxley (1894–1963)

190.

Biography



Figure 1: Aldous Huxley.

Aldous Huxley was descended from two eminent Victorian families—he was a grandson of noted biologist and writer on science, Thomas Henry Huxley, grandnephew of Matthew Arnold, and nephew of Victorian novelist Mary Augusta Ward (who wrote under her married name Mrs. Humphry Ward), Arnold's niece. His unusual Christian name commemorates a major character, Aldous Raeburn, in the novel *Marcella*, which Mrs. Ward published in the year of Huxley's birth, 1894.

Born in Godalming, Surrey, England, he received his first schooling from his mother, Julia Arnold Huxley. He then moved on to Hillside Preparatory School, Eton, and eventually, Balliol College, Oxford, taking a first in English in 1916. Two early blows—the death of his mother when he was only nine, and an attack of keratitis while he was a student at Eton, which left him nearly blind for the rest of his

life—may have sharpened his tendency toward introversion. Certainly the latter affliction precluded a career in science, paving the way for a life in letters.

In the course of his long literary career, Aldous Huxley published poetry collections, plays, essays, short fiction, travel narratives, biography, and criticism, but, like George Orwell, author of *Nineteen-Eighty-four*, he is best remembered as the author of a hugely influential utopian satire. Both men used the genre more than once. *Brave New World* began, like Orwell's *Coming Up for Air*, as a response to H. G. Wells's utopia, *Men Like Gods* (1923), and Huxley later wrote two more utopian-dystopian novels: *Ape and Essence* (1948) and *Island* (1962).

Although Huxley felt that he was not a "born novelist, but an essayist who writes novels," he became an innovative fictional stylist, effectively using cinematic montage technique for the purpose of exposition in the third chapter of *Brave New World*, thereby sparing the reader from that major defect of most utopian novels—the tedious guided tour of utopian schools, hospitals, and factories. With his use of montage and intertextuality, Huxley did for the novel what Eliot had done for modern poetry in *The Waste Land* 10 years earlier. Like Eliot, Huxley often uses multiple references to canonical works. In *Brave New World*, his 50 allusions to Shakespeare help develop theme. He also incorporates ideas of fashionable Freudians such as Ernest Jones and his interpretation of *Hamlet* to deepen the sense of the Savage's sexual repression. At opportune moments, he echoes key lines from Gray's "Elegy" and "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton" to underscore the ignorance-is-bliss theme and key images that recall the Utilitarian schoolroom in Dickens's *Hard Times*. Nor does he hesitate to use bathos: the deliberate contrasting of high culture with popular culture—excerpts from fictional advertising jingles and popular 1920s-era romances such as Elinor Glyn's *Three Weeks* satirize the contemporary lowering of musical and literary standards.

One notes a gradually emerging social conscience in Huxley at the time of his writing *Brave New World*. In fact, his satiric description of the reified workers in a dystopian factory was based on his visit to a Lucas automotive parts factory in Birmingham the previous spring.

In *Brave New World*, the novel's most sympathetic character, Helmholtz Watson, like Wordworth on Westminster Bridge, finds the silence of the sleeping metropolis to be eloquent: the very absence of the numinous in the wholly materialistic state begins, paradoxically, to suggest a presence. Watson is one of the first in what becomes a steady string of protagonists in his future novels who advocate what Huxley called "the great central technique, which traces the art of obtaining freedom from the fundamental human disability of egotism…repeatedly described by the mystics of all ages and countries." His final utopian novel, *Island* (1962), is, in fact, Huxley's final word on the subject of how to construct the good society. He died in Hollywood on November 22, 1963, the day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

Media Attributions

191.

Brave New World: Chapter 1

Aldous Huxley

A SQUAT grey building of only thirty-four storeys. Over the main entrance the words, CENTRAL LONDON HATCHERY AND CONDITIONING CENTRE, and, in a shield, the World State's motto, COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY.[1]

The enormous room on the ground floor faced towards the north. Cold for all the summer beyond the panes, for all the tropical heat of the room itself, a harsh thin light glared through the windows, hungrily seeking some draped lay figure, some pallid shape of academic goose-flesh, but finding only the glass and nickel and bleakly shining porcelain of a laboratory. Wintriness responded to wintriness. The overalls of the workers were white, their hands gloved with a pale corpse-coloured rubber. The light was frozen, dead, a ghost. Only from the yellow barrels of the microscopes did it borrow a certain rich and living substance, lying along the polished tubes like butter, streak after luscious streak in long recession down the work tables.

"And this," said the Director opening the door, "is the Fertilizing Room."

Bent over their instruments, three hundred Fertilizers were plunged, as the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning entered the room, in the scarcely breathing silence, the absent-minded, soliloquizing hum or whistle, of absorbed concentration. A troop of newly arrived students, very young, pink and callow, followed nervously, rather abjectly, at the Director's heels. Each of them carried a notebook, in which, whenever the great man spoke, he desperately scribbled. Straight from the horse's mouth. It was a rare privilege. The D. H. C. for Central London always made a point of personally conducting his new students round the various departments.

"Just to give you a general idea," he would explain to them. For of course some sort of general idea they must have, if they were to do their work intelligently—though as little of one, if they were to be good and happy members of society, as possible. For particulars, as every one knows, make for virtue and happiness; generalities are intellectually necessary evils. Not philosophers but fret-sawyers and stamp collectors compose the backbone of society.

"To-morrow," he would add, smiling at them with a slightly menacing geniality, "you'll be settling down to serious work. You won't have time for generalities. Meanwhile …"

Meanwhile, it was a privilege. Straight from the horse's mouth into the notebook. The boys scribbled like mad.

Tall and rather thin but upright, the Director advanced into the room. He had a long chin and big rather prominent teeth, just covered, when he was not talking, by his full, floridly curved lips. Old, young? Thirty? Fifty? Fifty-five? It was hard to say. And anyhow the question didn't arise; in this year of stability, A. F. 632,[2] it didn't occur to you to ask it.

"I shall begin at the beginning," said the D.H.C. and the more zealous students recorded his intention in their notebooks: *Begin at the beginning*. "These," he waved his hand, "are the incubators." And

1. An ironic allusion to the motto of the French Revolution, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity."
2. Anno Fordii (in the year of Our Ford). The Fordian dispensation began in 1908, when the Model-T Ford was introduced. So the novel is set 632 years after 1908, or in the year 2040 A.D. (in the year of Our Lord).

opening an insulated door he showed them racks upon racks of numbered test-tubes. “The week’s supply of ova. Kept,” he explained, “at blood heat; whereas the male gametes,” and here he opened another door, “they have to be kept at thirty-five instead of thirty-seven. Full blood heat sterilizes.” Rams wrapped in theremogene beget no lambs.

Still leaning against the incubators he gave them, while the pencils scurried illegibly across the pages, a brief description of the modern fertilizing process; spoke first, of course, of its surgical introduction—”the operation undergone voluntarily for the good of Society, not to mention the fact that it carries a bonus amounting to six months’ salary”; continued with some account of the technique for preserving the excised ovary alive and actively developing; passed on to a consideration of optimum temperature, salinity, viscosity; referred to the liquor in which the detached and ripened eggs were kept; and, leading his charges to the work tables, actually showed them how this liquor was drawn off from the test-tubes; how it was let out drop by drop onto the specially warmed slides of the microscopes; how the eggs which it contained were inspected for abnormalities, counted and transferred to a porous receptacle; how (and he now took them to watch the operation) this receptacle was immersed in a warm bouillon containing free-swimming spermatozoa—at a minimum concentration of one hundred thousand per cubic centimetre, he insisted; and how, after ten minutes, the container was lifted out of the liquor and its contents re-examined; how, if any of the eggs remained unfertilized, it was again immersed, and, if necessary, yet again; how the fertilized ova went back to the incubators; where the Alphas and Betas remained until definitely bottled; while the Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons were brought out again, after only thirty-six hours, to undergo Bokanovsky’s Process.[3]

“Bokanovsky’s Process,” repeated the Director, and the students underlined the words in their little notebooks.

One egg, one embryo, one adult—normality. But a bokanovskified egg will bud, will proliferate, will divide. From eight to ninety-six buds, and every bud will grow into a perfectly formed embryo, and every embryo into a full-sized adult. Making ninety-six human beings grow where only one grew before. Progress.

“Essentially,” the D.H.C. concluded, “bokanovskification consists of a series of arrests of development. We check the normal growth and, paradoxically enough, the egg responds by budding.”

Responds by budding. The pencils were busy.

He pointed. On a very slowly moving band a rack-full of test-tubes was entering a large metal box, another, rack-full was emerging. Machinery faintly purred. It took eight minutes for the tubes to go through, he told them. Eight minutes of hard X-rays being about as much as an egg can stand. A few died; of the rest, the least susceptible divided into two; most put out four buds; some eight; all were returned to the incubators, where the buds began to develop; then, after two days, were suddenly chilled, chilled and checked. Two, four, eight, the buds in their turn budded; and having budded were dosed almost to death with alcohol; consequently burgeoned again and having budded—bud out of bud out of bud—were thereafter—further arrest being generally fatal”—left to develop in peace. By which time the original egg was in a fair way to becoming anything from eight to ninety-six embryos— a prodigious improvement, you will agree, on nature. Identical twins—but not in piddling twos and threes as in the old viviparous days, when an egg would sometimes accidentally divide; actually by dozens, by scores at a time.

“Scores,” the Director repeated and flung out his arms, as though he were distributing largesse. “Scores.”

But one of the students was fool enough to ask where the advantage lay.

“My good boy!” The Director wheeled sharply round on him. “Can’t you see? Can’t you *see*?” He

3. Cloning.

raised a hand; his expression was solemn. "Bokanovsky's Process is one of the major instruments of social stability!"

Major instruments of social stability.

Standard men and women; in uniform batches. The whole of a small factory staffed with the products of a single bokanovskified egg.

"Ninety-six identical twins working ninety-six identical machines!" The voice was almost tremulous with enthusiasm. "You really know where you are. For the first time in history." He quoted the planetary motto. "Community, Identity, Stability." Grand words. "If we could bo-kanovskify indefinitely the whole problem would be solved."

Solved by standard Gammas, unvarying Deltas, uniform Epsilons. Millions of identical twins. The principle of mass production at last applied to biology.

"But, alas," the Director shook his head, "we can't bokanovskify indefinitely."

Ninety-six seemed to be the limit; seventy-two a good average. From the same ovary and with gametes of the same male to manufacture as many batches of identical twins as possible—that was the best (sadly a second best) that they could do. And even that was difficult.

"For in nature it takes thirty years for two hundred eggs to reach maturity. But our business is to stabilize the population at this moment, here and now. Dribbling out twins over a quarter of a century—what would be the use of that?"

Obviously, no use at all. But Podsnap's Technique[4] had immensely accelerated the process of ripening. They could make sure of at least a hundred and fifty mature eggs within two years. Fertilize and bokanovskify—in other words, multiply by seventy-two—and you get an average of nearly eleven thousand brothers and sisters in a hundred and fifty batches of identical twins, all within two years of the same age.

"And in exceptional cases we can make one ovary yield us over fifteen thousand adult individuals."

Beckoning to a fair-haired, ruddy young man who happened to be passing at the moment. "Mr. Foster,"[5] he called. The ruddy young man approached. "Can you tell us the record for a single ovary, Mr. Foster?"

"Sixteen thousand and twelve in this Centre," Mr. Foster replied without hesitation. He spoke very quickly, had a vivacious blue eye, and took an evident pleasure in quoting figures. "Sixteen thousand and twelve; in one hundred and eighty-nine batches of identicals. But of course they've done much better," he rattled on, "in some of the tropical Centres. Singapore has often produced over sixteen thousand five hundred; and Mombasa has actually touched the seventeen thousand mark. But then they have unfair advantages. You should see the way a negro ovary responds to pituitary! It's quite astonishing, when you're used to working with European material. Still," he added, with a laugh (but the light of combat was in his eyes and the lift of his chin was challenging), "still, we mean to beat them if we can. I'm working on a wonderful Delta-Minus ovary at this moment. Only just eighteen months old. Over twelve thousand seven hundred children already, either decanted or in embryo. And still going strong. We'll beat them yet."

"That's the spirit I like!" cried the Director, and clapped Mr. Foster on the shoulder. "Come along with us, and give these boys the benefit of your expert knowledge."

Mr. Foster smiled modestly. "With pleasure." They went.

In the Bottling Room all was harmonious bustle and ordered activity. Flaps of fresh sow's peritoneum

4. Accelerates the maturation of the eggs from an ovary, allowing many eggs from the same ovary to be fertilized at the same time. Podsnap is the character in Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* who is so satisfied with the status quo that he cannot understand anyone feeling differently. The name, of course, also suggests snapping the peas in a pod, and, hence, conformity—"as alike as two peas in a pod."
5. Foster's first name commemorates Henry Ford; his surname recalls Sir Michael Foster (1836-1907), an eminent British physiologist and author of *The Elements of Embryology* (1874).

ready cut to the proper size came shooting up in little lifts from the Organ Store in the sub-basement. Whizz and then, click! the lift-hatches hew open; the bottle-liner had only to reach out a hand, take the flap, insert, smooth-down, and before the lined bottle had had time to travel out of reach along the endless band, whizz, click! another flap of peritoneum had shot up from the depths, ready to be slipped into yet another bottle, the next of that slow interminable procession on the band.

Next to the Liners stood the Matriculators.[6] The procession advanced; one by one the eggs were transferred from their test-tubes to the larger containers; deftly the peritoneal lining was slit, the morula dropped into place, the saline solution poured in … and already the bottle had passed, and it was the turn of the labellers. Heredity, date of fertilization, membership of Bokanovsky Group—details were transferred from test-tube to bottle. No longer anonymous, but named, identified, the procession marched slowly on; on through an opening in the wall, slowly on into the Social Predestination Room. "Eighty-eight cubic metres of card-index," said Mr. Foster with relish, as they entered.

"Containing *all* the relevant information," added the Director.

"Brought up to date every morning."

"And co-ordinated every afternoon."

"On the basis of which they make their calculations."

"So many individuals, of such and such quality," said Mr. Foster.

"Distributed in such and such quantities."

"The optimum Decanting Rate at any given moment."

"Unforeseen wastages promptly made good."

"Promptly," repeated Mr. Foster. "If you knew the amount of overtime I had to put in after the last Japanese earthquake!"[7] He laughed good-humouredly and shook his head.

"The Predestinators send in their figures to the Fertilizers."

"Who give them the embryos they ask for."

"And the bottles come in here to be predestined in detail."

"After which they are sent down to the Embryo Store."

"Where we now proceed ourselves."

And opening a door Mr. Foster led the way down a staircase into the basement.

The temperature was still tropical. They descended into a thickening twilight. Two doors and a passage with a double turn insured the cellar against any possible infiltration of the day.

"Embryos are like photograph film," said Mr. Foster waggishly, as he pushed open the second door. "They can only stand red light."

And in effect the sultry darkness into which the students now followed him was visible and crimson, like the darkness of closed eyes on a summer's afternoon. The bulging flanks of row on receding row and tier above tier of bottles glinted with innumerable rubies, and among the rubies moved the dim red spectres of men and women with purple eyes and all the symptoms of lupus. The hum and rattle of machinery faintly stirred the air.

"Give them a few figures, Mr. Foster," said the Director, who was tired of talking.

Mr. Foster was only too happy to give them a few figures.

Two hundred and twenty metres long, two hundred wide, ten high. He pointed upwards. Like chickens drinking, the students lifted their eyes towards the distant ceiling.

Three tiers of racks: ground floor level, first gallery, second gallery.

6. Those who put a thing into the place where it will develop. From Latin: matrix, womb.

7. Huxley visited Japan on his round-the-world trip in April 1926. Both Tokyo and Yokohama had been devastated by the great Kanto earthquake of 1923, which left over 142,000 people dead. In his travel book *Jesting Pilate* (1926) Huxley describes the city: "Yokohama after the earthquake looks like a mining camp that has not yet been finished. There are dust-heaps among the shanties, there are holes in the roadways, there are unbuilt bridges"...(249).

The spidery steel-work of gallery above gallery faded away in all directions into the dark. Near them three red ghosts were busily unloading demijohns from a moving staircase.

The escalator from the Social Predestination Room.

Each bottle could be placed on one of fifteen racks, each rack, though you couldn't see it, was a conveyor traveling at the rate of thirty-three and a third centimetres an hour. Two hundred and sixty-seven days at eight metres a day. Two thousand one hundred and thirty-six metres in all. One circuit of the cellar at ground level, one on the first gallery, half on the second, and on the two hundred and sixty-seventh morning, daylight in the Decanting Room. Independent existence—so called.

"But in the interval," Mr. Foster concluded, "we've managed to do a lot to them. Oh, a very great deal." His laugh was knowing and triumphant.

"That's the spirit I like," said the Director once more. "Let's walk around. You tell them everything, Mr. Foster."

Mr. Foster duly told them.

Told them of the growing embryo on its bed of peritoneum. Made them taste the rich blood surrogate on which it fed. Explained why it had to be stimulated with placentin and thyroxin. Told them of the *corpus luteum* extract. Showed them the jets through which at every twelfth metre from zero to 2040 it was automatically injected. Spoke of those gradually increasing doses of pituitary administered during the final ninety-six metres of their course. Described the artificial maternal circulation installed in every bottle at Metre 112; showed them the reservoir of blood-surrogate, the centrifugal pump that kept the liquid moving over the placenta and drove it through the synthetic lung and waste product filter. Referred to the embryo's troublesome tendency to anaemia, to the massive doses of hog's stomach extract and foetal foal's liver with which, in consequence, it had to be supplied.

Showed them the simple mechanism by means of which, during the last two metres out of every eight, all the embryos were simultaneously shaken into familiarity with movement. Hinted at the gravity of the so-called "trauma of decanting,"[8] and enumerated the precautions taken to minimize, by a suitable training of the bottled embryo, that dangerous shock. Told them of the test for sex carried out in the neighborhood of Metre 200. Explained the system of labelling—a T for the males, a circle for the females and for those who were destined to become freemartins a question mark, black on a white ground.

"For of course," said Mr. Foster, "in the vast majority of cases, fertility is merely a nuisance. One fertile ovary in twelve hundred-that would really be quite sufficient for our purposes. But we want to have a good choice. And of course one must always have an enormous margin of safety. So we allow as many as thirty per cent of the female embryos to develop normally. The others get a dose of male sex-hormone every twenty-four metres for the rest of the course. Result: they're decanted as freemartins—structurally quite normal (except," he had to admit, "that they *do* have the slightest tendency to grow beards), but sterile. Guaranteed sterile. Which brings us at last," continued Mr. Foster, "out of the realm of mere slavish imitation of nature into the much more interesting world of human invention."

He rubbed his hands. For of course, they didn't content themselves with merely hatching out embryos: any cow could do that.

"We also predestine and condition. We decant our babies as socialized human beings, as Alphas or Epsilons, as future sewage workers or future …" He was going to say "future World controllers," but correcting himself, said "future Directors of Hatcheries," instead.

The D.H.C. acknowledged the compliment with a smile. They were passing Metre 320 on Rack 11.

8. An allusion to what a colleague of Freud's, Otto Rank, (1884-1939) called the Trauma of Birth (1923). Rank claimed that birth trauma was the root cause of all neuroses.

A young Beta-Minus mechanic was busy with screw-driver and spanner on the blood-surrogate pump of a passing bottle. The hum of the electric motor deepened by fractions of a tone as he turned the nuts. Down, down … A final twist, a glance at the revolution counter, and he was done. He moved two paces down the line and began the same process on the next pump.

“Reducing the number of revolutions per minute,” Mr. Foster explained. “The surrogate goes round slower; therefore passes through the lung at longer intervals; therefore gives the embryo less oxygen. Nothing like oxygen-shortage for keeping an embryo below par.” Again he rubbed his hands.

“But why do you want to keep the embryo below par?” asked an ingenuous student.

“Ass!” said the Director, breaking a long silence. “Hasn’t it occurred to you that an Epsilon embryo must have an Epsilon environment as well as an Epsilon heredity?”

It evidently hadn’t occurred to him. He was covered with confusion. “The lower the caste,” said Mr. Foster, “the shorter the oxygen.” The first organ affected was the brain. After that the skeleton. At seventy per cent of normal oxygen you got dwarfs. At less than seventy eyeless monsters.

“Who are no use at all,” concluded Mr. Foster.

Whereas (his voice became confidential and eager), if they could discover a technique for shortening the period of maturation what a triumph, what a benefaction to Society! “Consider the horse.” They considered it.

Mature at six; the elephant at ten. While at thirteen a man is not yet sexually mature; and is only full-grown at twenty. Hence, of course, that fruit of delayed development, the human intelligence. “But in Epsilons,” said Mr. Foster very justly, “we don’t need human intelligence.”

Didn’t need and didn’t get it. But though the Epsilon mind was mature at ten, the Epsilon body was not fit to work till eighteen. Long years of superfluous and wasted immaturity. If the physical development could be speeded up till it was as quick, say, as a cow’s, what an enormous saving to the Community!

“Enormous!” murmured the students. Mr. Foster’s enthusiasm was infectious.

He became rather technical; spoke of the abnormal endocrine coordination which made men grow so slowly; postulated a germinal mutation to account for it. Could the effects of this germinal mutation be undone? Could the individual Epsilon embryo be made a revert, by a suitable technique, to the normality of dogs and cows? That was the problem. And it was all but solved.

Pilkington, at Mombasa, had produced individuals who were sexually mature at four and full-grown at six and a half. A scientific triumph. But socially useless. Six-year-old men and women were too stupid to do even Epsilon work. And the process was an all-or-nothing one; either you failed to modify at all, or else you modified the whole way. They were still trying to find the ideal compromise between adults of twenty and adults of six. So far without success. Mr. Foster sighed and shook his head.

Their wanderings through the crimson twilight had brought them to the neighborhood of Metre 170 on Rack 9. From this point onwards Rack 9 was enclosed and the bottle performed the remainder of their journey in a kind of tunnel, interrupted here and there by openings two or three metres wide.

“Heat conditioning,” said Mr. Foster.

Hot tunnels alternated with cool tunnels. Coolness was wedded to discomfort in the form of hard X-rays. By the time they were decanted the embryos had a horror of cold. They were predestined to emigrate to the tropics, to be miner and acetate silk spinners and steel workers. Later on their minds would be made to endorse the judgment of their bodies. “We condition them to thrive on heat,” concluded Mr. Foster. “Our colleagues upstairs will teach them to love it.”

“And that,” put in the Director sententiously, “that is the secret of happiness and virtue—liking what you’ve *got* to do. All conditioning aims at that: making people like their unescapable social destiny.”

In a gap between two tunnels, a nurse was delicately probing with a long fine syringe into the gelatinous contents of a passing bottle. The students and their guides stood watching her for a few moments in silence.

"Well, Lenina," said Mr. Foster, when at last she withdrew the syringe and straightened herself up.

The girl turned with a start. One could see that, for all the lupus and the purple eyes, she was uncommonly pretty.

"Henry!" Her smile flashed redly at him—a row of coral teeth. "Charming, charming," murmured the Director and, giving her two or three little pats, received in exchange a rather deferential smile for himself.

"What are you giving them?" asked Mr. Foster, making his tone very professional.

"Oh, the usual typhoid and sleeping sickness."

"Tropical workers start being inoculated at Metre 150," Mr. Foster explained to the students. "The embryos still have gills. We immunize the fish against the future man's diseases." Then, turning back to Lenina, "Ten to five on the roof this afternoon," he said, "as usual."

"Charming," said the Director once more, and, with a final pat, moved away after the others.

On Rack 10 rows of next generation's chemical workers were being trained in the toleration of lead, caustic soda, tar, chlorine. The first of a batch of two hundred and fifty embryonic rocket-plane engineers was just passing the eleven hundred metre mark on Rack 3. A special mechanism kept their containers in constant rotation. "To improve their sense of balance," Mr. Foster explained. "Doing repairs on the outside of a rocket in mid-air is a ticklish job. We slacken off the circulation when they're right way up, so that they're half starved, and double the flow of surrogate when they're upside down. They learn to associate topsy-turvydom with well-being; in fact, they're only truly happy when they're standing on their heads.

"And now," Mr. Foster went on, "I'd like to show you some very interesting conditioning for Alpha Plus Intellectuals. We have a big batch of them on Rack 5. First Gallery level," he called to two boys who had started to go down to the ground floor.

"They're round about Metre 900," he explained. "You can't really do any useful intellectual conditioning till the foetuses have lost their tails. Follow me."

But the Director had looked at his watch. "Ten to three," he said. "No time for the intellectual embryos, I'm afraid. We must go up to the Nurseries before the children have finished their afternoon sleep."

Mr. Foster was disappointed. "At least one glance at the Decanting Room," he pleaded. "Very well then." The Director smiled indulgently. "Just one glance."

192.

Brave New World: Chapter 2

Aldous Huxley

MR. FOSTER was left in the Decanting Room. The D.H.C. and his students stepped into the nearest lift and were carried up to the fifth floor.

INFANT NURSERIES. NEO-PAVLOVIAN[1] CONDITIONING ROOMS, announced the notice board.

The Director opened a door. They were in a large bare room, very bright and sunny; for the whole of the southern wall was a single window. Half a dozen nurses, trousered and jacketed in the regulation white viscose-linen uniform, their hair aseptically hidden under white caps, were engaged in setting out bowls of roses in a long row across the floor. Big bowls, packed tight with blossom. Thousands of petals, ripe-blown and silkily smooth, like the cheeks of innumerable little cherubs, but of cherubs, in that bright light, not exclusively pink and Aryan, but also luminously Chinese, also Mexican, also apoplectic with too much blowing of celestial trumpets, also pale as death, pale with the posthumous whiteness of marble.

The nurses stiffened to attention as the D.H.C. came in.

"Set out the books," he said curtly.

In silence the nurses obeyed his command. Between the rose bowls the books were duly set out-a row of nursery quartos opened invitingly each at some gaily coloured image of beast or fish or bird.

"Now bring in the children."

They hurried out of the room and returned in a minute or two, each pushing a kind of tall dumb-waiter laden, on all its four wire-netted shelves, with eight-month-old babies, all exactly alike (a Bokanovsky Group, it was evident) and all (since their caste was Delta) dressed in khaki.

"Put them down on the floor."

The infants were unloaded.

"Now turn them so that they can see the flowers and books."

Turned, the babies at once fell silent, then began to crawl towards those clusters of sleek colours, those shapes so gay and brilliant on the white pages. As they approached, the sun came out of a momentary eclipse behind a cloud. The roses flamed up as though with a sudden passion from within; a new and profound significance seemed to suffuse the shining pages of the books. From the ranks of the crawling babies came little squeals of excitement, gurgles and twitterings of pleasure.

The Director rubbed his hands. "Excellent!" he said. "It might almost have been done on purpose."

The swiftest crawlers were already at their goal. Small hands reached out uncertainly, touched, grasped, unpetaling the transfigured roses, crumpling the illuminated pages of the books. The Director waited until all were happily busy. Then, "Watch carefully," he said. And, lifting his hand, he gave the signal.

The Head Nurse, who was standing by a switchboard at the other end of the room, pressed down a little lever.

1. Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936). A Russian physiologist and early pioneer of operant conditioning.

There was a violent explosion. Shriller and ever shriller, a siren shrieked. Alarm bells maddeningly sounded.

The children started, screamed; their faces were distorted with terror.

"And now," the Director shouted (for the noise was deafening), "now we proceed to rub in the lesson with a mild electric shock."

He waved his hand again, and the Head Nurse pressed a second lever. The screaming of the babies suddenly changed its tone. There was something desperate, almost insane, about the sharp spasmodic yelps to which they now gave utterance. Their little bodies twitched and stiffened; their limbs moved jerkily as if to the tug of unseen wires.

"We can electrify that whole strip of floor," bawled the Director in explanation. "But that's enough," he signalled to the nurse.

The explosions ceased, the bells stopped ringing, the shriek of the siren died down from tone to tone into silence. The stiffly twitching bodies relaxed, and what had become the sob and yelp of infant maniacs broadened out once more into a normal howl of ordinary terror.

"Offer them the flowers and the books again."

The nurses obeyed; but at the approach of the roses, at the mere sight of those gaily-coloured images of pussy and cock-a-doodle-doo and baa-baa black sheep, the infants shrank away in horror, the volume of their howling suddenly increased.

"Observe," said the Director triumphantly, "observe."

Books and loud noises, flowers and electric shocks—already in the infant mind these couples were compromisingly linked; and after two hundred repetitions of the same or a similar lesson would be wedded indissolubly. What man has joined, nature is powerless to put asunder.

"They'll grow up with what the psychologists used to call an 'instinctive' hatred of books and flowers. Reflexes unalterably conditioned. They'll be safe from books and botany all their lives." The Director turned to his nurses. "Take them away again."

Still yelling, the khaki babies were loaded on to their dumb-waiters and wheeled out, leaving behind them the smell of sour milk and a most welcome silence.

One of the students held up his hand; and though he could see quite well why you couldn't have lower-cast people wasting the Community's time over books, and that there was always the risk of their reading something which might undesirably decondition one of their reflexes, yet … well, he couldn't understand about the flowers. Why go to the trouble of making it psychologically impossible for Deltas to like flowers?

Patiently the D.H.C. explained. If the children were made to scream at the sight of a rose, that was on grounds of high economic policy. Not so very long ago (a century or thereabouts), Gammas, Deltas, even Epsilons, had been conditioned to like flowers-flowers in particular and wild nature in general. The idea was to make them want to be going out into the country at every available opportunity, and so compel them to consume transport.

"And didn't they consume transport?" asked the student.

"Quite a lot," the D.H.C. replied. "But nothing else."

Primroses and landscapes, he pointed out, have one grave defect: they are gratuitous. A love of nature keeps no factories busy. It was decided to abolish the love of nature, at any rate among the lower classes; to abolish the love of nature, but not the tendency to consume transport. For of course it was essential that they should keep on going to the country, even though they hated it. The problem was to find an economically sounder reason for consuming transport than a mere affection for primroses and landscapes. It was duly found.

"We condition the masses to hate the country," concluded the Director. "But simultaneously we condition them to love all country sports. At the same time, we see to it that all country sports shall entail

the use of elaborate apparatus. So that they consume manufactured articles as well as transport. Hence those electric shocks."

"I see," said the student, and was silent, lost in admiration.

There was a silence; then, clearing his throat, "Once upon a time," the Director began, "while our Ford was still on earth, there was a little boy called Reuben Rabinovitch. Reuben was the child of Polish-speaking parents."

The Director interrupted himself. "You know what Polish is, I suppose?"

"A dead language."

"Like French and German," added another student, officiously showing off his learning.

"And 'parent'?" questioned the D.H.C.

There was an uneasy silence. Several of the boys blushed. They had not yet learned to draw the significant but often very fine distinction between smut and pure science. One, at last, had the courage to raise a hand.

"Human beings used to be …" he hesitated; the blood rushed to his cheeks. "Well, they used to be viviparous."

"Quite right." The Director nodded approvingly.

"And when the babies were decanted …"

'"Born,"' came the correction.

"Well, then they were the parents—I mean, not the babies, of course; the other ones." The poor boy was overwhelmed with confusion.

"In brief," the Director summed up, "the parents were the father and the mother." The smut that was really science fell with a crash into the boys' eye-avoiding silence. "Mother," he repeated loudly rubbing in the science; and, leaning back in his chair, "These," he said gravely, "are unpleasant facts; I know it. But then most historical facts are unpleasant."

He returned to Little Reuben— to Little Reuben, in whose room, one evening, by an oversight, his father and mother (crash, crash!) happened to leave the radio turned on.

("For you must remember that in those days of gross viviparous reproduction, children were always brought up by their parents and not in State Conditioning Centres.")

While the child was asleep, a broadcast programme from London suddenly started to come through; and the next morning, to the astonishment of his crash and crash (the more daring of the boys ventured to grin at one another), Little Reuben woke up repeating word for word a long lecture by that curious old writer ("one of the very few whose works have been permitted to come down to us"), George Bernard Shaw, who was speaking, according to a well-authenticated tradition, about his own genius. To Little Reuben's wink and snigger, this lecture was, of course, perfectly incomprehensible and, imagining that their child had suddenly gone mad, they sent for a doctor. He, fortunately, understood English, recognized the discourse as that which Shaw had broadcasted the previous evening, realized the significance of what had happened, and sent a letter to the medical press about it.

"The principle of sleep-teaching, or hypnopaedia, had been discovered." The D.H.C. made an impressive pause.

The principle had been discovered; but many, many years were to elapse before that principle was usefully applied.

"The case of Little Reuben occurred only twenty-three years after Our Ford's first T-Model was put on the market." (Here the Director made a sign of the T on his stomach and all the students reverently followed suit.) "And yet …"

Furiously the students scribbled. "*Hypnopdedia, first used officially in A.F. 214. Why not before? Two reasons. (a) …*"

“These early experimenters,” the D.H.C. was saying, “were on the wrong track. They thought that hypnopaedia could be made an instrument of intellectual education …”

(A small boy asleep on his right side, the right arm stuck out, the right hand hanging limp over the edge of the bed. Through a round grating in the side of a box a voice speaks softly.

“The Nile is the longest river in Africa and the second in length of all the rivers of the globe. Although falling short of the length of the Mississippi-Missouri, the Nile is at the head of all rivers as regards the length of its basin, which extends through 35 degrees of latitude …”

At breakfast the next morning, “Tommy,” some one says, “do you know which is the longest river in Africa?” A shaking of the head. “But don’t you remember something that begins: The Nile is the …”

“The – Nile – is – the – longest – river – in – Africa – and – the – second -in – length – of – all – the – rivers – of – the – globe …” The words come rushing out. “Although – falling – short – of …”

“Well now, which is the longest river in Africa?”

The eyes are blank. “I don’t know.”

“But the Nile, Tommy.”

“The – Nile – is – the – longest – river – in – Africa – and – second …”

“Then which river is the longest, Tommy?”

Tommy burst into tears. “I don’t know,” he howls.)

That howl, the Director made it plain, discouraged the earliest investigators. The experiments were abandoned. No further attempt was made to teach children the length of the Nile in their sleep. Quite rightly. You can’t learn a science unless you know what it’s all about.

“Whereas, if they’d only started on *moral* education,” said the Director, leading the way towards the door. The students followed him, desperately scribbling as they walked and all the way up in the lift. “Moral education, which ought never, in any circumstances, to be rational.”

“Silence, silence,” whispered a loud speaker as they stepped out at the fourteenth floor, and “Silence, silence,” the trumpet mouths indefati-gably repeated at intervals down every corridor. The students and even the Director himself rose automatically to the tips of their toes. They were Alphas, of course, but even Alphas have been well conditioned. “Silence, silence.” All the air of the fourteenth floor was sibilant with the categorical imperative.

Fifty yards of tiptoeing brought them to a door which the Director cautiously opened. They stepped over the threshold into the twilight of a shuttered dormitory. Eighty cots stood in a row against the wall. There was a sound of light regular breathing and a continuous murmur, as of very faint voices remotely whispering.

A nurse rose as they entered and came to attention before the Director.

“What’s the lesson this afternoon?” he asked.

“We had Elementary Sex for the first forty minutes,” she answered. “But now it’s switched over to Elementary Class Consciousness.”

The Director walked slowly down the long line of cots. Rosy and relaxed with sleep, eighty little boys and girls lay softly breathing. There was a whisper under every pillow. The D.H.C. halted and, bending over one of the little beds, listened attentively.

“Elementary Class Consciousness, did you say? Let’s have it repeated a little louder by the trumpet.”

At the end of the room a loud speaker projected from the wall. The Director walked up to it and pressed a switch.

“… all wear green,” said a soft but very distinct voice, beginning in the middle of a sentence, “and Delta Children wear khaki. Oh no, I don’t want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They’re too stupid to be able to read or write. Besides they wear black, which is such a beastly colour. I’m so glad I’m a Beta.”

There was a pause; then the voice began again.

"Alpha children wear grey. They work much harder than we do, because they're so frightfully clever. I'm really awfuly glad I'm a Beta, because I don't work so hard. And then we are much better than the Gammas and Deltas. Gammas are stupid. They all wear green, and Delta children wear khaki. Oh no, I don't want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They're too stupid to be able …"

The Director pushed back the switch. The voice was silent. Only its thin ghost continued to mutter from beneath the eighty pillows.

"They'll have that repeated forty or fifty times more before they wake; then again on Thursday, and again on Saturday. A hundred and twenty times three times a week for thirty months. After which they go on to a more advanced lesson."

Roses and electric shocks, the khaki of Deltas and a whiff of asafetida—wedded indissolubly before the child can speak. But wordless conditioning is crude and wholesale; cannot bring home the finer distinctions, cannot inculcate the more complex courses of behaviour. For that there must be words, but words without reason. In brief, hypnopaedia.

"The greatest moralizing and socializing force of all time."

The students took it down in their little books. Straight from the horse's mouth.

Once more the Director touched the switch.

"… so frightfully clever," the soft, insinuating, indefatigable voice was saying, "I'm really awfully glad I'm a Beta, because …"

Not so much like drops of water, though water, it is true, can wear holes in the hardest granite; rather, drops of liquid sealing-wax, drops that adhere, incrust, incorporate themselves with what they fall on, till finally the rock is all one scarlet blob.

"Till at last the child's mind is these suggestions, and the sum of the suggestions *is* the child's mind. And not the child's mind only. The adult's mind too—all his life long. The mind that judges and desires and decides—made up of these suggestions. But all these suggestions are *our* suggestions!" The Director almost shouted in his triumph. "Suggestions from the State." He banged the nearest table. "It therefore follows …"

A noise made him turn round.

"Oh, Ford!" he said in another tone, "I've gone and woken the children."

…

193.

Brave New World: Chapter 3

Aldous Huxley

OUTSIDE, in the garden, it was playtime. Naked in the warm June sunshine, six or seven hundred little boys and girls were running with shrill yells over the lawns, or playing ball games, or squatting silently in twos and threes among the flowering shrubs. The roses were in bloom, two nightingales soliloquized in the boskage, a cuckoo was just going out of tune among the lime trees. The air was drowsy with the murmur of bees and helicopters.

The Director and his students stood for a short time watching a game of Centrifugal Bumble-puppy.[1] Twenty children were grouped in a circle round a chrome steel tower. A ball thrown up so as to land on the platform at the top of the tower rolled down into the interior, fell on a rapidly revolving disk, was hurled through one or other of the numerous apertures pierced in the cylindrical casing, and had to be caught.

"Strange," mused the Director, as they turned away, "strange to think that even in Our Ford's day most games were played without more apparatus than a ball or two and a few sticks and perhaps a bit of netting, imagine the folly of allowing people to play elaborate games which do nothing whatever to increase consumption. It's madness. Nowadays the Controllers won't approve of any new game unless it can be shown that it requires at least as much apparatus as the most complicated of existing games." He interrupted himself.

"That's a charming little group," he said, pointing.

In a little grassy bay between tall clumps of Mediterranean heather, two children, a little boy of about seven and a little girl who might have been a year older, were playing, very gravely and with all the fo-cussed attention of scientists intent on a labour of discovery, a rudimentary sexual game.

"Charming, charming!" the D.H.C. repeated sentimentally.

"Charming," the boys politely agreed. But their smile was rather patronizing. They had put aside similar childish amusements too recently to be able to watch them now without a touch of contempt. Charming? but it was just a pair of kids fooling about; that was all. Just kids.

"I always think," the Director was continuing in the same rather maudlin tone, when he was interrupted by a loud boo-hooing.

From a neighbouring shrubbery emerged a nurse, leading by the hand a small boy, who howled as he went. An anxious-looking little girl trotted at her heels.

"What's the matter?" asked the Director.

The nurse shrugged her shoulders. "Nothing much," she answered. "It's just that this little boy seems rather reluctant to join in the ordinary erotic play. I'd noticed it once or twice before. And now again today. He started yelling just now …"

"Honestly," put in the anxious-looking little girl, "I didn't mean to hurt him or anything. Honestly."

"Of course you didn't, dear," said the nurse reassuringly. "And so," she went on, turning back to the

1. In chapter 10 of E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View* (1908), bumble-puppy is facetiously described as "an ancient and most honourable game, which consists in striking tennis-balls high into the air, so that they fall over the net and immoderately bounce...." Also, a game in which a ball, attached by a string to a post, is hit so that the string winds around the post.

Director, "I'm taking him in to see the Assistant Superintendent of Psychology. Just to see if anything's at all abnormal."

"Quite right," said the Director. "Take him in. You stay here, little girl," he added, as the nurse moved away with her still howling charge. "What's your name?"

"Polly Trotsky."[2]

"And a very good name too," said the Director. "Run away now and see if you can find some other little boy to play with."

The child scampered off into the bushes and was lost to sight.

"Exquisite little creature!" said the Director, looking after her. Then, turning to his students, "What I'm going to tell you now," he said, "may sound incredible. But then, when you're not accustomed to history, most facts about the past do sound incredible."

He let out the amazing truth. For a very long period before the time of Our Ford, and even for some generations afterwards, erotic play between children had been regarded as abnormal (there was a roar of laughter); and not only abnormal, actually immoral (no!): and had therefore been rigorously suppressed.

A look of astonished incredulity appeared on the faces of his listeners. Poor little kids not allowed to amuse themselves? They could not believe it.

"Even adolescents," the D.H.C. was saying, "even adolescents like yourselves …"

"Not possible!"

"Barring a little surreptitious auto-erotism and homosexuality—absolutely nothing."

"*Nothing*?"

"In most cases, till they were over twenty years old."

"Twenty years old?" echoed the students in a chorus of loud disbelief.

"Twenty," the Director repeated. "I told you that you'd find it incredible."

"But what happened?" they asked. "What were the results?"

"The results were terrible." A deep resonant voice broke startlingly into the dialogue.

They looked around. On the fringe of the little group stood a stranger—a man of middle height, black-haired, with a hooked nose, full red lips, eyes very piercing and dark. "Terrible," he repeated.

The D.H.C. had at that moment sat down on one of the steel and rubber benches conveniently scattered through the gardens; but at the sight of the stranger, he sprang to his feet and darted forward, his hand outstretched, smiling with all his teeth, effusive.

"Controller! What an unexpected pleasure! Boys, what are you thinking of? This is the Controller; this is his fordship, Mustapha Mond."[3]

In the four thousand rooms of the Centre the four thousand electric clocks simultaneously struck four. Discarnate voices called from the trumpet mouths.

"Main Day-shift off duty. Second Day-shift take over. Main Day-shift off…"

In the lift, on their way up to the changing rooms, Henry Foster and the Assistant Director of Predestination rather pointedly turned their backs on Bernard Marx[4] from the Psychology Bureau: averted themselves from that unsavoury reputation.

The faint hum and rattle of machinery still stirred the crimson air in the Embryo Store. Shifts might

2. Leon Trotsky (1879-1940) was a Russian revolutionary who lost a power struggle with Joseph Stalin after Lenin's death and was eventually expelled from the Communist Party and deported from the Soviet Union in 1929.
3. The names of Huxley's world-controller suggest Turkish strongman Mustapha Kemal (1881-1938), first president of the Republic of Turkey. His surname alludes to Sir Alfred Mond, Lord Melchett (1868-1930), a British industrialist, financier and politician, who famously rationalized the British chemical industry. He was chairman of ICI (Imperial Chemical Industries). Shortly before writing *Brave New World,* Huxley wrote an essay ("Sight-seeing in Alien Englands" about his visit to the ICI factory in the north of England.
4. His name alludes to Karl Marx (1818-1883), a German economist and revolutionary socialist, who, with F. Engels, wrote *The Communist Manifesto* (1848). His main work was *Das Kapital* (1867). His first name perhaps suggests Bernard Shaw, a life-long socialist.

come and go, one lupus-coloured face give place to another; majestically and for ever the conveyors crept forward with their load of future men and women.

Lenina Crowne walked briskly towards the door.

His fordship Mustapha Mond! The eyes of the saluting students almost popped out of their heads. Mustapha Mond! The Resident Controller for Western Europe! One of the Ten World Controllers. One of the Ten … and he sat down on the bench with the D.H.C, he was going to stay, to stay, yes, and actually talk to them … straight from the horse's mouth. Straight from the mouth of Ford himself.

Two shrimp-brown children emerged from a neighbouring shrubbery, stared at them for a moment with large, astonished eyes, then returned to their amusements among the leaves.

"You all remember," said the Controller, in his strong deep voice, "you all remember, I suppose, that beautiful and inspired saying of Our Ford's: History is bunk. History," he repeated slowly, "is bunk."

He waved his hand; and it was as though, with an invisible feather wisk, he had brushed away a little dust, and the dust was Harappa, was Ur of the Chaldees; some spider-webs, and they were Thebes and Babylon and Cnossos and Mycenae.[5] Whisk. Whisk—and where was Odysseus, where was Job, where were Jupiter and Gotama and Jesus? Whisk—and those specks of antique dirt called Athens and Rome, Jerusalem and the Middle Kingdom—all were gone. Whisk—the place where Italy had been was empty. Whisk, the cathedrals; whisk, whisk, King Lear and the Thoughts of Pascal. Whisk, Passion; whisk, Requiem; whisk, Symphony; whisk …

"Going to the Feelies[6] this evening, Henry?" enquired the Assistant Pre-destinator. "I hear the new one at the Alhambra is first-rate. There's a love scene on a bearskin rug; they say it's marvellous. Every hair of the bear reproduced. The most amazing tactual effects."

"That's why you're taught no history," the Controller was saying. "But now the time has come …"

The D.H.C. looked at him nervously. There were those strange rumours of old forbidden books hidden in a safe in the Controller's study. Bibles, poetry—Ford knew what.

Mustapha Mond intercepted his anxious glance and the corners of his red lips twitched ironically.

"It's all right, Director," he said in a tone of faint derision, "I won't corrupt them."

The D.H.C. was overwhelmed with confusion.

Those who feel themselves despised do well to look despising. The smile on Bernard Marx's face was contemptuous. Every hair on the bear indeed!

"I shall make a point of going," said Henry Foster.

Mustapha Mond leaned forward, shook a finger at them. "Just try to realize it," he said, and his voice sent a strange thrill quivering along their diaphragms. "Try to realize what it was like to have a viviparous mother."

That smutty word again. But none of them dreamed, this time, of smiling.

"Try to imagine what 'living with one's family' meant."

They tried; but obviously without the smallest success.

"And do you know what a 'home' was?"

They shook their heads.

From her dim crimson cellar Lenina Crowne[7] shot up seventeen stories, turned to the right as she stepped out of the lift, walked down a long corridor and, opening the door marked GIRLS' DRESSING-

5. Great cities and centres of civilization in the ancient world.
6. cf. "the talkies," or talking films. Huxley was unimpressed by the first feature-length talkie *The Jazz Singer* (1927), and later wrote a hostile critique of it called "Silence is Golden."
7. Lenina's surname perhaps alludes to John Crowne (1640?-1712), a Restoration playwright, whose song "The Foolish Maid" from *The Married Beau* (1694) sets up the irony that her tendency to monogamy could lead to her "ruin." Her first name calls to mind Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924), chairman of the Council of People's Commisars of the Russian SFSR and first leader of the Soviet Union. His New Economic Policy (NEP), a system of state capitalism, stressed the rapid industrialization of the Soviet Union.

ROOM, plunged into a deafening chaos of arms and bosoms and underclothing. Torrents of hot water were splashing into or gurgling out of a hundred baths. Rumbling and hissing, eighty vibro-vacuum massage machines were simultaneously kneading and sucking the firm and sunburnt flesh of eighty superb female specimens. Every one was talking at the top of her voice. A Synthetic Music machine was warbling out a super-cornet solo.

"Hullo, Fanny," said Lenina to the young woman who had the pegs and locker next to hers.

Fanny worked in the Bottling Room, and her surname was also Crowne. But as the two thousand million inhabitants of the plant had only ten thousand names between them, the coincidence was not particularly surprising.

Lenina pulled at her zippers—downwards on the jacket, downwards with a double-handed gesture at the two that held trousers, downwards again to loosen her undergarment. Still wearing her shoes and stockings, she walked off towards the bathrooms.

Home, home—a few small rooms, stiflingly over-inhabited by a man, by a periodically teeming woman, by a rabble of boys and girls of all ages. No air, no space; an understerilized prison; darkness, disease, and smells.

(The Controller's evocation was so vivid that one of the boys, more sensitive than the rest, turned pale at the mere description and was on the point of being sick.)

Lenina got out of the bath, toweled herself dry, took hold of a long flexible tube plugged into the wall, presented the nozzle to her breast, as though she meant to commit suicide, pressed down the trigger. A blast of warmed air dusted her with the finest talcum powder. Eight different scents and eau-de-Cologne were laid on in little taps over the wash-basin. She turned on the third from the left, dabbed herself with chypre and, carrying her shoes and stockings in her hand, went out to see if one of the vibro-vacuum machines were free.

And home was as squalid psychically as physically. Psychically, it was a rabbit hole, a midden, hot with the frictions of tightly packed life, reeking with emotion. What suffocating intimacies, what dangerous, insane, obscene relationships between the members of the family group! Maniacally, the mother brooded over her children (*her* children) … brooded over them like a cat over its kittens; but a cat that could talk, a cat that could say, "My baby, my baby," over and over again. "My baby, and oh, oh, at my breast, the little hands, the hunger, and that unspeakable agonizing pleasure! Till at last my baby sleeps, my baby sleeps with a bubble of white milk at the corner of his mouth. My little baby sleeps …"

"Yes," said Mustapha Mond, nodding his head, "you may well shudder."

"Who are you going out with to-night?" Lenina asked, returning from the vibro-vac like a pearl illuminated from within, pinkly glowing.

"Nobody."

Lenina raised her eyebrows in astonishment.

"I've been feeling rather out of sorts lately," Fanny explained. "Dr. Wells[8] advised me to have a Pregnancy Substitute."

"But, my dear, you're only nineteen. The first Pregnancy Substitute isn't compulsory till twenty-one."

"I know, dear. But some people are better if they begin earlier. Dr. Wells told me that brunettes with wide pelvises, like me, ought to have their first Pregnancy Substitute at seventeen. So I'm really two years late, not two years early." She opened the door of her locker and pointed to the row of boxes and labelled phials on the upper shelf.

"SYRUP OF CORPUS LUTEUM," Lenina read the names aloud. "OVARIN, GUARANTEED FRESH: NOT TO BE USED AFTER AUGUST 1ST, A.F. 632. MAMMARY GLAND EXTRACT: TO

8. H. G. Wells (1866-1946). Socialist author of famous science-fiction romances and utopias. An advocate of world government, similar to that found in *BNW*. Huxley initially set out reply satirically to Wells's typical utopian futures in *BNW*.

BE TAKEN THREE TIMES DAILY, BEFORE MEALS, WITH A LITTLE WATER. PLACENTIN: 5cc TO BE INJECTED INTRAVENALLY EVERY THIRD DAY … Ugh!” Lenina shuddered. “How I loathe intravenals, don’t you?”

“Yes. But when they do one good …” Fanny was a particularly sensible girl.

Our Ford—or Our Freud, as, for some inscrutable reason, he chose to call himself whenever he spoke of psychological matters—Our Freud had been the first to reveal the appalling dangers of family life. The world was full of fathers—was therefore full of misery; full of mothers—therefore of every kind of perversion from sadism to chastity; full of brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts—full of madness and suicide.

“And yet, among the savages of Samoa, in certain islands off the coast of New Guinea …”

The tropical sunshine lay like warm honey on the naked bodies of children tumbling promiscuously among the hibiscus blossoms. Home was in any one of twenty palm-thatched houses. In the Trobriands conception was the work of ancestral ghosts; nobody had ever heard of a father.

“Extremes,” said the Controller, “meet. For the good reason that they were made to meet.”

“Dr. Wells says that a three months’ Pregnancy Substitute now will make all the difference to my health for the next three or four years.”

“Well, I hope he’s right,” said Lenina. “But, Fanny, do you really mean to say that for the next three months you’re not supposed to …”

“Oh no, dear. Only for a week or two, that’s all. I shall spend the evening at the Club playing Musical Bridge. I suppose you’re going out?”

Lenina nodded.

“Who with?”

“Henry Foster.”

“Again?” Fanny’s kind, rather moon-like face took on an incongruous expression of pained and disapproving astonishment. “Do you mean to tell me you’re *still* going out with Henry Foster?”

Mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters. But there were also husbands, wives, lovers. There were also monogamy and romance.

“Though you probably don’t know what those are,” said Mustapha Mond.

They shook their heads.

Family, monogamy, romance. Everywhere exclusiveness, a narrow channelling of impulse and energy.

“But every one belongs to every one else,” he concluded, citing the hypnopaedic proverb.

The students nodded, emphatically agreeing with a statement which upwards of sixty-two thousand repetitions in the dark had made them accept, not merely as true, but as axiomatic, self-evident, utterly indisputable.

“But after all,” Lenina was protesting, “it’s only about four months now since I’ve been having Henry.”

“*Only* four months! I like that. And what’s more,” Fanny went on, pointing an accusing finger, “there’s been nobody else except Henry all that time. Has there?”

Lenina blushed scarlet; but her eyes, the tone of her voice remained defiant. “No, there hasn’t been any one else,” she answered almost truculently. “And I jolly well don’t see why there should have been.”

“Oh, she jolly well doesn’t see why there should have been,” Fanny repeated, as though to an invisible listener behind Lenina’s left shoulder. Then, with a sudden change of tone, “But seriously,” she said, “I really do think you ought to be careful. It’s such horribly bad form to go on and on like this with one man. At forty, or thirty-five, it wouldn’t be so bad. But at your age, Lenina! No, it really won’t do. And you know how strongly the D.H.C. objects to anything intense or long-drawn. Four months of Henry Foster, without having another man—why, he’d be furious if he knew …”

“Think of water under pressure in a pipe.” They thought of it. “I pierce it once,” said the Controller. “What a jet!”

He pierced it twenty times. There were twenty piddling little fountains.

“My baby. My baby …!”

“Mother!” The madness is infectious.

“My love, my one and only, precious, precious …”

Mother, monogamy, romance. High spurts the fountain; fierce and foamy the wild jet. The urge has but a single outlet. My love, my baby. No wonder these poor pre-moderns were mad and wicked and miserable. Their world didn’t allow them to take things easily, didn’t allow them to be sane, virtuous, happy. What with mothers and lovers, what with the prohibitions they were not conditioned to obey, what with the temptations and the lonely remorses, what with all the diseases and the endless isolating pain, what with the uncertainties and the poverty—they were forced to feel strongly. And feeling strongly (and strongly, what was more, in solitude, in hopelessly individual isolation), how could they be stable?

“Of course there’s no need to give him up. Have somebody else from time to time, that’s all. He has other girls, doesn’t he?”

Lenina admitted it.

“Of course he does. Trust Henry Foster to be the perfect gentleman—always correct. And then there’s the Director to think of. You know what a stickler…”

Nodding, “He patted me on the behind this afternoon,” said Lenina.

“There, you see!” Fanny was triumphant. “That shows what *he* stands for. The strictest conventionality.”

“Stability,” said the Controller, “stability. No civilization without social stability. No social stability without individual stability.” His voice was a trumpet. Listening they felt larger, warmer.

The machine turns, turns and must keep on turning—for ever. It is death if it stands still. A thousand millions scrabbled the crust of the earth. The wheels began to turn. In a hundred and fifty years there were two thousand millions. Stop all the wheels. In a hundred and fifty weeks there are once more only a thousand millions; a thousand thousand thousand men and women have starved to death.

Wheels must turn steadily, but cannot turn untended. There must be men to tend them, men as steady as the wheels upon their axles, sane men, obedient men, stable in contentment.

Crying: My baby, my mother, my only, only love groaning: My sin, my terrible God; screaming with pain, muttering with fever, bemoaning old age and poverty—how can they tend the wheels? And if they cannot tend the wheels … The corpses of a thousand thousand thousand men and women would be hard to bury or burn.

“And after all,” Fanny’s tone was coaxing, “it’s not as though there were anything painful or disagreeable about having one or two men besides Henry. And seeing that you ought to be a little more promiscuous …”

“Stability,” insisted the Controller, “stability. The primal and the ultimate need. Stability. Hence all this.”

With a wave of his hand he indicated the gardens, the huge building of the Conditioning Centre, the naked children furtive in the undergrowth or running across the lawns.

Lenina shook her head. “Somehow,” she mused, “I hadn’t been feeling very keen on promiscuity lately. There are times when one doesn’t. Haven’t you found that too, Fanny?”

Fanny nodded her sympathy and understanding. “But one’s got to make the effort,” she said, sententiously, “one’s got to play the game. After all, every one belongs to every one else.”

“Yes, every one belongs to every one else,” Lenina repeated slowly and, sighing, was silent for a moment; then, taking Fanny’s hand, gave it a little squeeze. “You’re quite right, Fanny. As usual. I’ll make the effort.”

Impulse arrested spills over, and the flood is feeling, the flood is passion, the flood is even madness:

it depends on the force of the current, the height and strength of the barrier. The unchecked stream flows smoothly down its appointed channels into a calm well-being. (The embryo is hungry; day in, day out, the blood-surrogate pump unceasingly turns its eight hundred revolutions a minute. The decanted infant howls; at once a nurse appears with a bottle of external secretion. Feeling lurks in that interval of time between desire and its consummation. Shorten that interval, break down all those old unnecessary barriers.

"Fortunate boys!" said the Controller. "No pains have been spared to make your lives emotionally easy—to preserve you, so far as that is possible, from having emotions at all."

"Ford's in his flivver,"[9] murmured the D.H.C. "All's well with the world."[10]

"Lenina Crowne?" said Henry Foster, echoing the Assistant Predestina-tor's question as he zipped up his trousers. "Oh, she's a splendid girl. Wonderfully pneumatic.[11] I'm surprised you haven't had her."

"I can't think how it is I haven't," said the Assistant Predestinator. "I certainly will. At the first opportunity."

From his place on the opposite side of the changing-room aisle, Bernard Marx overheard what they were saying and turned pale.

"And to tell the truth," said Lenina, "I'm beginning to get just a tiny bit bored with nothing but Henry every day." She pulled on her left stocking. "Do you know Bernard Marx?" she asked in a tone whose excessive casualness was evidently forced.

Fanny looked startled. "You don't mean to say …?"

"Why not? Bernard's an Alpha Plus. Besides, he asked me to go to one of the Savage Reservations with him. I've always wanted to see a Savage Reservation."

"But his reputation?"

"What do I care about his reputation?"

"They say he doesn't like Obstacle Golf."

"They say, they say," mocked Lenina.

"And then he spends most of his time by himself—*alone*." There was horror in Fanny's voice.

"Well, he won't be alone when he's with me. And anyhow, why are people so beastly to him? I think he's rather sweet." She smiled to herself; how absurdly shy he had been! Frightened almost—as though she were a World Controller and he a Gamma-Minus machine minder.

"Consider your own lives," said Mustapha Mond. "Has any of you ever encountered an insurmountable obstacle?"

The question was answered by a negative silence.

"Has any of you been compelled to live through a long time-interval between the consciousness of a desire and its fufilment?"

"Well," began one of the boys, and hesitated.

"Speak up," said the D.H.C. "Don't keep his fordship waiting."

"I once had to wait nearly four weeks before a girl I wanted would let me have her."

"And you felt a strong emotion in consequence?"

"Horrible!"

"Horrible; precisely," said the Controller. "Our ancestors were so stupid and short-sighted that when

9. A familiar name for the Model T Ford, which was introduced in 1908.
10. An allusion to Robert Browning (1812-1899), " Pippa's Song" from his verse drama Pippa Passes: "God's in his Heaven—All's right with the world!"
11. From Latin pneumaticus, relating to wind or air. (Of a woman) well-rounded; full-breasted. Huxley probably alludes here to T. S. Eliot, "Whispers of Immortality" (1920): "...Grishkin is nice: her Russian eye/Is underlined for emphasis;/Uncorseted, her friendly bust/Gives promise of pneumatic bliss."

the first reformers came along and offered to deliver them from those horrible emotions, they wouldn't have anything to do with them."

"Talking about her as though she were a bit of meat." Bernard ground his teeth. "Have her here, have her there." Like mutton. Degrading her to so much mutton. She said she'd think it over, she said she'd give me an answer this week. Oh, Ford, Ford, Ford." He would have liked to go up to them and hit them in the face—hard, again and again.

"Yes, I really do advise you to try her," Henry Foster was saying.

"Take Ectogenesis.[12] Pfitzner and Kawaguchi[13] had got the whole technique worked out. But would the Governments look at it? No. There was something called Christianity. Women were forced to go on being viviparous."

"He's so ugly!" said Fanny.

"But I rather like his looks."

"And then so *small*." Fanny made a grimace; smallness was so horribly and typically low-caste.

"I think that's rather sweet," said Lenina. "One feels one would like to pet him. You know. Like a cat."

Fanny was shocked. "They say somebody made a mistake when he was still in the bottle—thought he was a Gamma and put alcohol into his blood-surrogate. That's why he's so stunted."

"What nonsense!" Lenina was indignant.

"Sleep teaching was actually prohibited in England. There was something called liberalism. Parliament, if you know what that was, passed a law against it. The records survive. Speeches about liberty of the subject. Liberty to be inefficient and miserable. Freedom to be a round peg in a square hole."

"But, my dear chap, you're welcome, I assure you. You're welcome." Henry Foster patted the Assistant Predestinator on the shoulder. "Every one belongs to every one else, after all."

One hundred repetitions three nights a week for four years, thought Bernard Marx, who was a specialist on hypnopaedia. Sixty-two thousand four hundred repetitions make one truth. Idiots!

"Or the Caste System. Constantly proposed, constantly rejected. There was something called democracy. As though men were more than physico-chemically equal."

"Well, all I can say is that I'm going to accept his invitation."

Bernard hated them, hated them. But they were two, they were large, they were strong.

"The Nine Years' War began in A.F. 141."

"Not even if it *were* true about the alcohol in his blood-surrogate."

"Phosgene, chloropicrin, ethyl iodoacetate, diphenylcyanarsine, tri-chlormethyl, chloroformate, dichlorethyl sulphide. Not to mention hydrocyanic acid."

"Which I simply don't believe," Lenina concluded.

"The noise of fourteen thousand aeroplanes advancing in open order. But in the Kurfurstendamm[14] and the Eighth Arrondissement,[15] the explosion of the anthrax bombs is hardly louder than the popping of a paper bag."

"Because I *do* want to see a Savage Reservation."

CH3 C6H2(N02)3 Hg(CNO) 2 =well, what? An enormous hole in the ground, a pile of masonry, some bits of flesh and mucus, a foot, with the boot still on it, flying through the air and landing, flop, in the middle of the geraniums—the scarlet ones; such a splendid show that summer!

"You're hopeless, Lenina, I give you up."

12. In-vitro fertilization.
13. Two imaginary scientists, but Hans Pfitzner (1869-1949) was a German anti-modernist composer, and Ekai Kawaguchi (1866-1945) was a Japanese Buddhist monk who wrote a travel book, *Three Years in Tibet*, to which Huxley refers in *On the Margin* (1923).
14. A famous street in Berlin.
15. A central district of Paris.

"The Russian technique for infecting water supplies was particularly ingenious."

Back turned to back, Fanny and Lenina continued their changing in silence.

"The Nine Years' War, the great Economic Collapse. There was a choice between World Control and destruction. Between stability and …"

"Fanny Crowne's a nice girl too," said the Assistant Predestinator.

In the nurseries, the Elementary Class Consciousness lesson was over, the voices were adapting future demand to future industrial supply. "I do love flying," they whispered, "I do love flying, I do love having new clothes, I do love …"

"Liberalism, of course, was dead of anthrax, but all the same you couldn't do things by force."

"Not nearly so pneumatic as Lenina. Oh, not nearly."

"But old clothes are beastly," continued the untiring whisper. "We always throw away old clothes. Ending is better than mending, ending is better than mending, ending is better…"

"Government's an affair of sitting, not hitting. You rule with the brains and the buttocks, never with the fists. For example, there was the conscription of consumption."

"There, I'm ready," said Lenina, but Fanny remained speechless and averted. "Let's make peace, Fanny darling."

"Every man, woman and child compelled to consume so much a year. In the interests of industry. The sole result …"

"Ending is better than mending. The more stitches, the less riches; the more stitches …"

"One of these days," said Fanny, with dismal emphasis, "you'll get into trouble."

"Conscientious objection on an enormous scale. Anything not to consume. Back to nature."

"I do love flying. I do love flying."

"Back to culture. Yes, actually to culture. You can't consume much if you sit still and read books."

"Do I look all right?" Lenina asked. Her jacket was made of bottle green acetate cloth with green viscose fur; at the cuffs and collar.

"Eight hundred Simple Lifers were mowed down by machine guns at Golders Green."

"Ending is better than mending, ending is better than mending."

Green corduroy shorts and white viscose-woollen stockings turned down below the knee.

"Then came the famous British Museum Massacre. Two thousand culture fans gassed with dichlorethyl sulphide."

A green-and-white jockey cap shaded Lenina's eyes; her shoes were bright green and highly polished.

"In the end," said Mustapha Mond, "the Controllers realized that force was no good. The slower but infinitely surer methods of ectogenesis, neo-Pavlovian conditioning and hypnopaedia …"

And round her waist she wore a silver-mounted green morocco-surrogate cartridge belt, bulging (for Lenina was not a freemartin[16]) with the regulation supply of contraceptives.

"The discoveries of Pfitzner and Kawaguchi were at last made use of. An intensive propaganda against viviparous reproduction …"

"Perfect!" cried Fanny enthusiastically. She could never resist Lenina's charm for long. "And what a perfectly *sweet* Malthusian belt!"[17]

"Accompanied by a campaign against the Past; by the closing of museums, the blowing up of historical monuments (luckily most of them

had already been destroyed during the Nine Years' War); by the suppression of all books published before A.F. 150."

I simply must get one like it," said Fanny.

16. A sterile female, usually applied to calves twinborn with a male.
17. A belt used to carry contraceptives, named after Thomas Malthus (1766-1834), whose *Essay on Population* (1798) argued for artificial checks on population.

There were some things called the pyramids, for example.

My old black-patent bandolier…"

And a man called Shakespeare. You've never heard of them of course."

'It's an absolute disgrace—that bandolier of mine."

'Such are the advantages of a really scientific education."

'The more stitches the less riches; the more stitches the less …"

'The introduction of Our Ford's first T-Model …"

'I've had it nearly three months."

'Chosen as the opening date of the new era."

'Ending is better than mending; ending is better …"

'There was a thing, as I've said before, called Christianity."

'Ending is better than mending."

'The ethics and philosophy of under-consumption …"

'I love new clothes, I love new clothes, I love …"

'So essential when there was under-production; but in an age of machines and the fixation of nitrogen—positively a crime against society."

'Henry Foster gave it me."

All crosses had their tops cut and became T's. There was also a thing called God."

It's real morocco-surrogate."

We have the World State now. And Ford's Day celebrations, and Community Sings, and Solidarity Services."

Ford, how I hate them!" Bernard Marx was thinking.

There was a thing called Heaven; but all the same they used to drink enormous quantities of alcohol."

'Like meat, like so much meat."

'There was a thing called the soul and a thing called immortality."

'Do ask Henry where he got it."

'But they used to take morphia and cocaine."

'And what makes it worse, she thinks of herself as meat."

'Two thousand pharmacologists and bio-chemists were subsidized in A.P. 178."

He does look glum," said the Assistant Predestinator, pointing at Bernard Marx.

Six years later it was being produced commercially. The perfect drug."

Let's bait him."

Euphoric, narcotic, pleasantly hallucinant."

Glum, Marx, glum." The clap on the shoulder made him start, look up. It was that brute Henry Foster. "What you need is a gramme of *soma*."

All the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects."

Ford, I should like to kill him!" But all he did was to say, "No, thank you," and fend off the proffered tube of tablets.

Take a holiday from reality whenever you like, and come back without so much as a headache or a mythology."

Take it," insisted Henry Foster, "take it."

"Stability was practically assured."

"One cubic centimetre cures ten gloomy sentiments," said the Assistant Predestinator citing a piece of homely hypnopaedic wisdom.

"It only remained to conquer old age."

"Damn you, damn you!" shouted Bernard Marx.

"Hoity-toity."

"Gonadal hormones, transfusion of young blood, magnesium salts …"

"And do remember that a gramme is better than a damn." They went out, laughing.

"All the physiological stigmata of old age have been abolished. And along with them, of course …"

"Don't forget to ask him about that Malthusian belt," said Fanny.

"Along with them all the old man's mental peculiarities. Characters remain constant throughout a whole lifetime."

"… two rounds of Obstacle Golf to get through before dark. I must fly."

"Work, play—at sixty our powers and tastes are what they were at seventeen. Old men in the bad old days used to renounce, retire, take to religion, spend their time reading, thinking—thinking!"

"Idiots, swine!" Bernard Marx was saying to himself, as he walked down the corridor to the lift.

"Now—such is progress—the old men work, the old men copulate, the old men have no time, no leisure from pleasure, not a moment to sit down and think-or if ever by some unlucky chance such a crevice of time should yawn in the solid substance of their distractions, there is always *soma*, delicious *soma*, half a gramme for a half-holiday, a gramme for a week-end, two grammes for a trip to the gorgeous East, three for a dark eternity on the moon; returning whence they find themselves on the other side of the crevice, safe on the solid ground of daily labour and distraction, scampering from feely to feely, from girl to pneumatic girl, from Electromagnetic Golf course to …"

"Go away, little girl," shouted the D.H.C. angrily. "Go away, little boy! Can't you see that his fordship's busy? Go and do your erotic play somewhere else."

"Suffer little children,"[18] said the Controller.

Slowly, majestically, with a faint humming of machinery, the Conveyors moved forward, thirty-three centimters an hour. In the red darkness glinted innumerable rubies.

18. Permit. See Mark 10: 13-15. In response to his disciples who rebuked those that brought young children to Christ: "But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of god as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

194.

Brave New World: Chapter 4

Aldous Huxley

§1

THE LIFT was crowded with men from the Alpha Changing Rooms, and Lenina's entry wars greeted by many friendly nods and smiles. She was a popular girl and, at one time or another, had spent a night with almost all of them.

They were dear boys, she thought, as she returned their salutations. Charming boys! Still, she did wish that George Edzel's[1] ears weren't quite so big (perhaps he'd been given just a spot too much parathyroid at Metre 328?). And looking at Benito Hoover,[2] she couldn't help remembering that he was really too hairy when he took his clothes off.

Turning, with eyes a little saddened by the recollection, of Benito's curly blackness, she saw in a corner the small thin body, the melancholy face of Bernard Marx.

"Bernard!" she stepped up to him. "I was looking for you." Her voice rang clear above the hum of the mounting lift. The others looked round curiously. "I wanted to talk to you about our New Mexico plan." Out of the tail of her eye she could see Benito Hoover gaping with astonishment. The gape annoyed her. "Surprised I shouldn't be begging to go with *him* again!" she said to herself. Then aloud, and more warmly than ever, "I'd simply *love* to come with you for a week in July," she went on. (Anyhow, she was publicly proving her unfaithfulness to Henry. Fanny ought to be pleased, even though it was Bernard.) "That is," Lenina gave him her most deliciously significant smile, "if you still want to have me."

Bernard's pale face flushed. "What on earth for?" she wondered, astonished, but at the same time touched by this strange tribute to her power.

"Hadn't we better talk about it somewhere else?" he stammered, looking horribly uncomfortable.

"As though I'd been saying something shocking," thought Lenina. "He couldn't look more upset if I'd made a dirty joke-asked him who his mother was, or something like that."

"I mean, with all these people about …" He was choked with confusion.

Lenina's laugh was frank and wholly unmalicious. "How funny you are!" she said; and she quite genuinely did think him funny. "You'll give me at least a week's warning, won't you," she went on in another tone. "I suppose we take the Blue Pacific Rocket? Does it start from the Charing-T Tower? Or is it from Hampstead?"

Before Bernard could answer, the lift came to a standstill.

"Roof!" called a creaking voice.

The liftman was a small simian creature, dressed in the black tunic of an Epsilon-Minus Semi-Moron. "Roof!"

He flung open the gates. The warm glory of afternoon sunlight made him start and blink his eyes.

1. Edsel Ford (1893-1943). The son of Henry Ford; president of the Ford Motor Co., from 1919 until his death.
2. Benito Hoover, alludes to Italian Fascist dictator of Italy, Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) and Herbert Hoover (1874-1964), 31st president of the United States, who as American Secretary of Commerce had spearheaded the St. Lawrence Seaway and Hoover Dam projects.

"Oh, roof!" he repeated in a voice of rapture. He was as though suddenly and joyfully awakened from a dark annihilating stupor. "Roof!"

He smiled up with a kind of doggily expectant adoration into the faces of his passengers. Talking and laughing together, they stepped out into the light. The liftman looked after them.

"Roof?" he said once more, questioningly.

Then a bell rang, and from the ceiling of the lift a loud speaker began, very softly and yet very imperiously, to issue its commands.

"Go down," it said, "go down. Floor Eighteen. Go down, go down. Floor Eighteen. Go down, go …"

The liftman slammed the gates, touched a button and instantly dropped back into the droning twilight of the well, the twilight of his own habitual stupor.

It was warm and bright on the roof. The summer afternoon was drowsy with the hum of passing helicopters; and the deeper drone of the rocket-planes hastening, invisible, through the bright sky five or six miles overhead was like a caress on the soft air. Bernard Marx drew a deep breath. He looked up into the sky and round the blue horizon and finally down into Lenina's face.

"Isn't it beautiful!" His voice trembled a little.

She smiled at him with an expression of the most sympathetic understanding. "Simply perfect for Obstacle Golf," she answered rapturously. "And now I must fly, Bernard. Henry gets cross if I keep him waiting. Let me know in good time about the date." And waving her hand she ran away across the wide flat roof towards the hangars. Bernard stood watching the retreating twinkle of the white stockings, the sunburnt knees vivaciously bending and unbending again, again, and the softer rolling of those well-fitted corduroy shorts beneath the bottle green jacket. His face wore an expression of pain.

"I should say she was pretty," said a loud and cheery voice just behind him.

Bernard started and looked around. The chubby red face of Benito Hoover was beaming down at him—beaming with manifest cordiality. Benito was notoriously good-natured. People said of him that he could have got through life without ever touching *soma*. The malice and bad tempers from which other people had to take holidays never afflicted him. Reality for Benito was always sunny.

"Pneumatic too. And how!" Then, in another tone: "But, I say," he went on, "you do look glum! What you need is a gramme of *soma*." Diving into his right-hand trouser-pocket, Benito produced a phial. "One cubic centimetre cures ten gloomy … But, I say!"

Bernard had suddenly turned and rushed away.

Benito stared after him. "What can be the matter with the fellow?" he wondered, and, shaking his head, decided that the story about the alcohol having been put into the poor chap's blood-surrogate must be true. "Touched his brain, I suppose."

He put away the *soma* bottle, and taking out a packet of sex-hormone chewing-gum, stuffed a plug into his cheek and walked slowly away towards the hangars, ruminating.

Henry Foster had had his machine wheeled out of its lock-up and, when Lenina arrived, was already seated in the cockpit, waiting.

"Four minutes late," was all his comment, as she climbed in beside him. He started the engines and threw the helicopter screws into gear. The machine shot vertically into the air. Henry accelerated; the humming of the propeller shrilled from hornet to wasp, from wasp to mosquito; the speedometer showed that they were rising at the best part of two kilometres a minute. London diminished beneath them. The huge table-topped buildings were no more, in a few seconds, than a bed of geometrical mushrooms sprouting from the green of park and garden. In the midst of them, thin-stalked, a taller, slenderer fungus, the Charing-T Tower lifted towards the sky a disk of shining concrete.

Like the vague torsos of fabulous athletes, huge fleshy clouds lolled on the blue air above their heads. Out of one of them suddenly dropped a small scarlet insect, buzzing as it fell.

"There's the Red Rocket," said Henry, "just come in from New York." Looking at his watch.

“Seven minutes behind time,” he added, and shook his head. “These Atlantic services—they’re really scandalously unpunctual.”

He took his foot off the accelerator. The humming of the screws overhead dropped an octave and a half, back through wasp and hornet to bumble bee, to cockchafer, to stag-beetle. The upward rush of the machine slackened off; a moment later they were hanging motionless in the air. Henry pushed at a lever; there was a click. Slowly at first, then faster and faster, till it was a circular mist before their eyes, the propeller in front of them began to revolve. The wind of a horizontal speed whistled ever more shrilly in the stays. Henry kept his eye on the revolution-counter; when the needle touched the twelve hundred mark, he threw the helicopter screws out of gear. The machine had enough forward momentum to be able to fly on its planes.

Lenina looked down through the window in the floor between her feet. They were flying over the six kilometre zone of park-land that separated Central London from its first ring of satellite suburbs. The green was maggoty with fore-shortened life. Forests of Centrifugal Bumble-puppy towers gleamed between the trees. Near Shepherd’s Bush two thousand Beta-Minus mixed doubles were playing Riemann-surface tennis. A double row of Escalator Fives Courts lined the main road from Notting Hill to Willesden. In the Ealing stadium a Delta gymnastic display and community sing was in progress.

“What a hideous colour khaki is,” remarked Lenina, voicing the hyp-nopaedic prejudices of her caste.

The buildings of the Hounslow Feely Studio covered seven and a half hectares. Near them a black and khaki army of labourers was busy re-vitrifying the surface of the Great West Road. One of the huge travelling crucibles was being tapped as they flew over. The molten stone poured out in a stream of dazzling incandescence across the road, the asbestos rollers came and went; at the tail of an insulated watering cart the steam rose in white clouds.

At Brentford the Television Corporation’s factory was like a small town.

“They must be changing the shift,” said Lenina.

Like aphides and ants, the leaf-green Gamma girls, the black Semi-Morons swarmed round the entrances, or stood in queues to take their places in the monorail tram-cars. Mulberry-coloured Beta-Minuses came and went among the crowd. The roof of the main building was alive with the alighting and departure of helicopters.

“My word,” said Lenina, “I’m glad I’m not a Gamma.”

Ten minutes later they were at Stoke Poges and had started their first round of Obstacle Golf.

§2

WITH eyes for the most part downcast and, if ever they lighted on a fellow creature, at once and furtively averted, Bernard hastened across the roof. He was like a man pursued, but pursued by enemies he does not wish to see, lest they should seem more hostile even than he had supposed, and he himself be made to feel guiltier and even more helplessly alone.

“That horrible Benito Hoover!” And yet the man had meant well enough. Which only made it, in a way, much worse. Those who meant well behaved in the same way as those who meant badly. Even Lenina was making him suffer. He remembered those weeks of timid indecision, during which he had looked and longed and despaired of ever having the courage to ask her. Dared he face the risk of being humiliated by a contemptuous refusal? But if she were to say yes, what rapture! Well, now she had said it and he was still wretched—wretched that she should have thought it such a perfect afternoon for Obstacle Golf, that she should have trotted away to join Henry Foster, that she should have found him

funny for not wanting to talk of their most private affairs in public. Wretched, in a word, because she had behaved as any healthy and virtuous English girl ought to behave and not in some other, abnormal, extraordinary way.

He opened the door of his lock-up and called to a lounging couple of Delta-Minus attendants to come and push his machine out on to the roof. The hangars were staffed by a single Bokanovsky Group, and the men were twins, identically small, black and hideous. Bernard gave his orders in the sharp, rather arrogant and even offensive tone of one who does not feel himself too secure in his superiority. To have dealings with members of the lower castes was always, for Bernard, a most distressing experience. For whatever the cause (and the current gossip about the alcohol in his blood-surrogate may very likely—for accidents will happen—have been true) Bernard's physique as hardly better than that of the average Gamma. He stood eight centimetres short of the standard Alpha height and was slender in proportion. Contact with members of he lower castes always reminded him painfully of this physical inadequacy. "I am I, and wish I wasn't"; his self-consciousness was acute and stressing. Each time he found himself looking on the level, instead of downward, into a Delta's face, he felt humiliated. Would the creature treat him with the respect due to his caste? The question haunted him. Not without reason. For Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons had been to some extent conditioned to associate corporeal mass with social superiority. Indeed, a faint hypnopaedic prejudice in favour of size was universal. Hence the laughter of the women to whom he made proposals, the practical joking of his equals among the men. The mockery made him feel an outsider; and feeling an outsider he behaved like one, which increased the prejudice against him and intensified the contempt and hostility aroused by his physical defects. Which in turn increased his sense of being alien and alone. A chronic fear of being slighted made him avoid his equals, made him stand, where his inferiors were concerned, self-consciously on his dignity. How bitterly he envied men like Henry Foster and Benito Hoover! Men who never had to shout at an Epsilon to get an order obeyed; men who took their position for granted; men who moved through the caste system as a fish through water—so utterly at home as to be unaware either of themselves or of the beneficent and comfortable element in which they had their being.

Slackly, it seemed to him, and with reluctance, the twin attendants wheeled his plane out on the roof.

"Hurry up!" said Bernard irritably. One of them glanced at him. Was that a kind of bestial derision that he detected in those blank grey eyes? "Hurry up!" he shouted more loudly, and there was an ugly rasp in his voice.

He climbed into the plane and, a minute later, was flying southwards, towards the river.

The various Bureaux of Propaganda and the College of Emotional Engineering were housed in a single sixty-story building in Fleet Street. In the basement and on the low floors were the presses and offices of the three great London newspapers—*The Hourly Radio*, an upper-caste sheet, the pale green *Gamma Gazette*, and, on khaki paper and in words exclusively of one syllable, *The Delta Mirror*. Then came the Bureaux of Propaganda by Television, by Feeling Picture, and by Synthetic Voice and Music respectively—twenty-two floors of them. Above were the search laboratories and the padded rooms in which Sound-Track Writers and Synthetic Composers did the delicate work. The top eighteen floors were occupied the College of Emotional Engineering.

Bernard landed on the roof of Propaganda House and stepped out.

"Ring down to Mr. Helmholtz Watson,"[3] he ordered the Gamma-Plus porter, "and tell him that Mr. Bernard Marx is waiting for him on the roof."

He sat down and lit a cigarette.

Helmholtz Watson was writing when the message came down.

3. Watson's first name alludes to Hermann von Helmholtz (1821-1894), the German physicist who formulated the law of the conservation of energy. His surname refers to John Broadus Watson (1878-1958), an American psychologist who established the school of behaviourism. He was a disciple of Pavlov.

“Tell him I’m coming at once,” he said and hung up the receiver. Then, turning to his secretary, “I’ll leave you to put my things away,” he went on in the same official and impersonal tone; and, ignoring her lustrous smile, got up and walked briskly to the door.

He was a powerfully built man, deep-chested, broad-shouldered, massive, and yet quick in his movements, springy and agile. The round strong pillar of his neck supported a beautifully shaped head. His hair was dark and curly, his features strongly marked. In a forcible emphatic way, he was handsome and looked, as his secretary was never tired of repeating, every centimetre an Alpha Plus. By profession he was a lecturer at the College of Emotional Engineering (Department of Writing) and the intervals of his educational activities, a working Emotional Engineer. He wrote regularly for *The Hourly Radio*, composed feely scenarios, and had the happiest knack for slogans and hypnopaedic rhymes.

“Able,” was the verdict of his superiors. “Perhaps, (and they would shake their heads, would significantly lower their voices) “a little *too* able.”

Yes, a little too able; they were right. A mental excess had produced in Helmholtz Watson effects very similar to those which, in Bernard Marx, were the result of a physical defect. Too little bone and brawn had isolated Bernard from his fellow men, and the sense of this apartness, being, by all the current standards, a mental excess, became in its turn a cause of wider separation. That which had made Helmholtz so uncomfortably aware of being himself and all alone was too much ability. What the two men shared was the knowledge that they were individuals. But whereas the physically defective Bernard had suffered all his life from the consciousness of being separate, it was only quite recently that, grown aware of his mental excess, Helmholtz Watson had also become aware of his difference from the people who surrounded him. This Escalator-Squash champion, this indefatigable lover (it was said that he had had six hundred and forty different girls in under four years), this admirable committee man and best mixer had realized quite suddenly that sport, women, communal activities were only, so far as he was concerned, second bests. Really, and at the bottom, he was interested in something else. But in what? In what? That was the problem which Bernard had come to discuss with him-or rather, since it was always Helmholtz who did all the talking, to listen to his friend discussing, yet once more.

Three charming girls from the Bureau of Propaganda by Synthetic Voice waylaid him as he stepped out of the lift.

“Oh, Helmholtz, darling, *do* come and have a picnic supper with us on Exmoor.” They clung round him imploringly.

He shook his head, he pushed his way through them. “No, no.”

“We’re not inviting any other man.”

But Helmholtz remained unshaken even by this delightful promise. “No,” he repeated, “I’m busy.” And he held resolutely on his course. The girls trailed after him. It was not till he had actually climbed into Bernard’s plane and slammed the door that they gave up pursuit. Not without reproaches.

“These women!” he said, as the machine rose into the air. “These women!” And he shook his head, he frowned. “Too awful,” Bernard hypocritically agreed, wishing, as he spoke the words, that he could have as many girls as Helmholtz did, and with as little trouble. He was seized with a sudden urgent need to boast. “I’m taking Lenina Crowne to New Mexico with me,” he said in a tone as casual as he could make it.

“Are you?” said Helmholtz, with a total absence of interest. Then after a little pause, “This last week or two,” he went on, “I’ve been cutting all my committees and all my girls. You can’t imagine what a hullabaloo they’ve been making about it at the College. Still, it’s been worth it, I think. The effects …” He hesitated. “Well, they’re odd, they’re very odd.”

A physical shortcoming could produce a kind of mental excess. The process, it seemed, was reversible. Mental excess could produce, for its own purposes, the voluntary blindness and deafness of deliberate solitude, the artificial impotence of asceticism.

The rest of the short flight was accomplished in silence. When they had arrived and were comfortably stretched out on the pneumatic sofas in Bernard's room, Helmholtz began again.

Speaking very slowly, "Did you ever feel," he asked, "as though you had something inside you that was only waiting for you to give it a chance to come out? Some sort of extra power that you aren't using—you know, like all the water that goes down the falls instead of through the turbines?" He looked at Bernard questioningly.

"You mean all the emotions one might be feeling if things were different?"

Helmholtz shook his head. "Not quite. I'm thinking of a queer feeling I sometimes get, a feeling that I've got something important to say and the power to say it—only I don't know what it is, and I can't make any use of the power. If there was some different way of writing … Or else something else to write about …" He was silent; then, "You see," he went on at last, "I'm pretty good at inventing phrases-you know, the sort of words that suddenly make you jump, almost as though you'd sat on a pin, they seem so new and exciting even though they're about something hypnopaedically obvious. But that doesn't seem enough. It's not enough for the phrases to be good; what you make with them ought to be good too."

"But your things are good, Helmholtz."

"Oh, as far as they go." Helmholtz shrugged his shoulders. "But they go such a little way. They aren't important enough, somehow. I feel I could do something much more important. Yes, and more intense, more violent. But what? What is there more important to say? And how can one be violent about the sort of things one's expected to write about? Words can be like X-rays, if you use them properly—they'll go through anything. You read and you're pierced. That's one of the things I try to teach my students—how to write piercingly. But what on earth's the good of being pierced by an article about a Community Sing,[4] or the latest improvement in scent organs? Besides, can you make words really piercing—you know, like the very hardest X-rays—when you're writing about that sort of thing? Can you say something about nothing? That's what it finally boils down to. I try and I try…"

"Hush!" said Bernard suddenly, and lifted a warning finger; they listened. "I believe there's somebody at the door," he whispered.

Helmholtz got up, tiptoed across the room, and with a sharp quick movement flung the door wide open. There was, of course, nobody there.

"I'm sorry," said Bernard, feeling and looking uncomfortably foolish. "I suppose I've got things on my nerves a bit. When people are suspicious with you, you start being suspicious with them."

He passed his hand across his eyes, he sighed, his voice became plaintive. He was justifying himself. "If you knew what I'd had to put up with recently," he said almost tearfully—and the uprush of his self-pity was like a fountain suddenly released. "If you only knew!"

Helmholtz Watson listened with a certain sense of discomfort. "Poor little Bernard!" he said to himself. But at the same time he felt rather ashamed for his friend. He wished Bernard would show a little more pride.

4. *The Daily Express*, a conservative British newspaper, began actively to promote community singing in 1926—often in football stadiums or other large public places—in an effort to increase social coherence after the divisive General Strike of that year.

195.

Brave New World: Chapter 5

Aldous Huxley

§1

BY EIGHT O'CLOCK the light was failing. The loud speaker in the tower of the Stoke Poges Club House began, in a more than human tenor,[1] to announce the closing of the courses. Lenina and Henry abandoned their game and walked back towards the Club. From the grounds of the Internal and External Secretion Trust came the lowing of those thousands of cattle which provided, with their hormones and their milk, the raw materials for the great factory at Farnham Royal.

An incessant buzzing of helicopters filled the twilight. Every two and a half minutes a bell and the screech of whistles announced the departure of one of the light monorail trains which carried the lower caste golfers back from their separate course to the metropolis.

Lenina and Henry climbed into their machine and started off. At eight hundred feet Henry slowed down the helicopter screws, and they hung for a minute or two poised above the fading landscape. The forest of Burnham Beeches stretched like a great pool of darkness towards the bright shore of the western sky. Crimson at the horizon, the last of the sunset faded, through orange, upwards into yellow and a pale watery green. Northwards, beyond and above the trees, the Internal and External Secretions factory glared with a fierce electric brilliance from every window of its twenty stories. Beneath them lay the buildings of the Golf Club—the huge Lower Caste barracks and, on the other side of a dividing wall, the smaller houses reserved for Alpha and Beta members. The approaches to the monorail station were black with the antlike pullulation of lower-caste activity. From under the glass vault a lighted train shot out into the open. Following its southeasterly course across the dark plain their eyes were drawn to the majestic buildings of the Slough Crematorium. For the safety of night-flying planes, its four tall chimneys were flood-lighted and tipped with crimson danger signals. It was a landmark.

"Why do the smoke-stacks have those things like balconies around them?" enquired Lenina.

"Phosphorus recovery," explained Henry telegraphically. "On their way up the chimney the gases go through four separate treatments. P_2O_5 used to go right out of circulation every time they cremated some one. Now they recover over ninety-eight per cent of it. More than a kilo and a half per adult corpse. Which makes the best part of four hundred tons of phosphorus every year from England alone." Henry spoke with a happy pride, rejoicing whole-heartedly in the achievement, as though it had been his own. "Fine to think we can go on being socially useful even after we're dead. Making plants grow."

Lenina, meanwhile, had turned her eyes away and was looking perpendicularly downwards at the monorail station. "Fine," she agreed. "But queer that Alphas and Betas won't make any more plants grow than those nasty little Gammas and Deltas and Epsilons down there."

"All men are physico-chemically equal," said Henry sententiously. "Besides, even Epsilons perform indispensable services."

1. With this reference to Stoke Poges and "human tenor," Huxley begins a series of allusions on this page to Thomas Gray (1716-1771) and his "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," with ironic intent. See Study Questions and Activities at the end of this chapter on *BNW*.

"Even an Epsilon …" Lenina suddenly remembered an occasion when, as a little girl at school, she had woken up in the middle of the night and become aware, for the first time, of the whispering that had haunted all her sleeps. She saw again the beam of moonlight, the row of small white beds; heard once more the soft, soft voice that said (the words were there, unforgotten, unforgettable after so many night-long repetitions): "Every one works for every one else. We can't do without any one. Even Epsilons are useful. We couldn't do without Epsilons. Every one works for every one else. We can't do without any one …" Lenina remembered her first shock of fear and surprise; her speculations through half a wakeful hour; and then, under the influence of those endless repetitions, the gradual soothing of her mind, the soothing, the smoothing, the stealthy creeping of sleep. …

"I suppose Epsilons don't really mind being Epsilons," she said aloud.

"Of course they don't. How can they? They don't know what it's like being anything else. We'd mind, of course. But then we've been differently conditioned. Besides, we start with a different heredity."

"I'm glad I'm not an Epsilon," said Lenina, with conviction.

"And if you were an Epsilon," said Henry, "your conditioning would have made you no less thankful that you weren't a Beta or an Alpha." He put his forward propeller into gear and headed the machine towards London. Behind them, in the west, the crimson and orange were almost faded; a dark bank of cloud had crept into the zenith. As they flew over the crematorium, the plane shot upwards on the column of hot air rising from the chimneys, only to fall as suddenly when it passed into the descending chill beyond.

"What a marvellous switchback!" Lenina laughed delightedly.

But Henry's tone was almost, for a moment, melancholy. "Do you know what that switchback was?" he said. "It was some human being finally and definitely disappearing. Going up in a squirt of hot gas. It would be curious to know who it was—a man or a woman, an Alpha or an Epsilon. …" He sighed. Then, in a resolutely cheerful voice, "Anyhow," he concluded, "there's one thing we can be certain of; whoever he may have been, he was happy when he was alive. Everybody's happy now."

"Yes, everybody's happy now," echoed Lenina. They had heard the words repeated a hundred and fifty times every night for twelve years.

Landing on the roof of Henry's forty-story apartment house in Westminster, they went straight down to the dining-hall. There, in a loud and cheerful company, they ate an excellent meal. Soma was served with the coffee. Lenina took two half-gramme tablets and Henry three. At twenty past nine they walked across the street to the newly opened Westminster Abbey Cabaret. It was a night almost without clouds, moonless and starry; but of this on the whole depressing fact Lenina

and Henry were fortunately unaware. The electric sky-signs effectively shut off the outer darkness. "CALVIN STOPES[2] AND HIS SIXTEEN SEXOPHONISTS." From the fagade of the new Abbey the giant letters invitingly glared. "LONDON'S FINEST SCENT AND COLOUR ORGAN. ALL THE LATEST SYNTHETIC MUSIC."

They entered. The air seemed hot and somehow breathless with the scent of ambergris and sandalwood. On the domed ceiling of the hall, the colour organ had momentarily painted a tropical sunset. The Sixteen Sexophonists were playing an old favourite: "There ain't no Bottle in all the world like that dear little Bottle of mine." Four hundred couples were five-stepping round the polished floor. Lenina and Henry were soon the four hundred and first. The saxophones wailed like melodious cats under the moon, moaned in the alto and tenor registers as though the little death were upon them. Rich with a wealth of harmonics, their tremulous chorus mounted towards a climax, louder and ever louder—until at last, with a wave of his hand, the conductor let loose the final shattering note of

2. This brave-new-worldian bandleader's name suggests John Calvin (1509-1564) a Protestant Reformation theologian famous for his doctrine of predestination, and Marie Stopes (1880-1958), British author and campaigner for women's rights and pioneer in the field of birth control.

ether-music and blew the sixteen merely human blowers clean out of existence. Thunder in A flat major. And then, in all but silence, in all but darkness, there followed a gradual deturgescence, a *diminuendo* sliding gradually, through quarter tones, down, down to a faintly whispered dominant chord that lingered on (while the five-four rhythms still pulsed below) charging the darkened seconds with an intense expectancy. And at last expectancy was fulfilled. There was a sudden explosive sunrise, and simultaneously, the Sixteen burst into song:

“Bottle of mine, it’s you I’ve always wanted!
Bottle of mine, why was I ever decanted?
Skies are blue inside of you,
The weather’s always fine; For
There ain ‘t no Bottle in all the world
Like that dear little Bottle of mine.”

Five-stepping with the other four hundred round and round Westminster Abbey, Lenina and Henry were yet dancing in another world—the warm, the richly coloured, the infinitely friendly world of *soma*-holiday. How kind, how good-looking, how delightfully amusing every one was! “Bottle of mine, it’s you I’ve always wanted …” But Lenina and Henry had what they wanted … They were inside, here and now—safely inside with the fine weather, the perennially blue sky. And when, exhausted, the Sixteen had laid by their saxophones and the Synthetic Music apparatus was producing the very latest in slow Malthusian Blues, they might have been twin embryos gently rocking together on the waves of a bottled ocean of blood-surrogate.

“Good-night, dear friends. Good-night, dear friends.” The loud speakers veiled their commands in a genial and musical politeness. “Goodnight, dear friends …”

Obediently, with all the others, Lenina and Henry left the building. The depressing stars had travelled quite some way across the heavens. But though the separating screen of the sky-signs had now to a great extent dissolved, the two young people still retained their happy ignorance of the night.

Swallowing half an hour before closing time, that second dose of *soma* had raised a quite impenetrable wall between the actual universe and their minds. Bottled, they crossed the street; bottled, they took the lift up to Henry’s room on the twenty-eighth floor. And yet, bottled as she was, and in spite of that second gramme of *soma*, Lenina did not forget to take all the contraceptive precautions prescribed by the regulations. Years of intensive hypnopaedia and, from twelve to seventeen, Malthusian drill three times a week had made the taking of these precautions almost as automatic and inevitable as blinking. “Oh, and that reminds me,” she said, as she came back from the bathroom, “Fanny Crowne wants to know where you found that lovely green morocco-surrogate cartridge belt you gave me.”

§2

ALTERNATE Thursdays were Bernard’s Solidarity Service days. After an early dinner at the Aphroditeum[3] (to which Helrnholtz had recently been elected under Rule Two) he took leave of his friend and, hailing a taxi on the roof told the man to fly to the Fordson Community Singery. The machine rose a couple of hundred metres, then headed eastwards, and as it turned, there before Bernard’s eyes, gigantically beautiful, was the Singery. Flood-lighted, its three hundred and twenty metres of white Carrara-surrogate gleamed with a snowy incandescence over Ludgate Hill; at each of the four corners of

3. A play on the Athenaeum, then a prestigious London private gentlemen’s club club founded in 1824, whose members included important literary, scientific and political figures, including Dickens, Darwin and Churchill. Huxley became an elected member in 1922. Fittingly, Aphrodite is the Greek goddess of love.

its helicopter platform an immense T shone crimson against the night, and from the mouths of twenty-four vast golden trumpets rumbled a solemn synthetic music.

"Damn, I'm late," Bernard said to himself as he first caught sight of Big Henry, the Singery clock. And sure enough, as he was paying off his cab, Big Henry sounded the hour. "Ford," sang out an immense bass voice from all the golden trumpets. "Ford, Ford, Ford …" Nine times. Bernard ran for the lift.

The great auditorium for Ford's Day celebrations and other massed Community Sings was at the bottom of the building. Above it, a hundred to each floor, were the seven thousand rooms used by Solidarity Groups for their fortnight services. Bernard dropped down to floor thirty-three, hurried along the corridor, stood hesitating for a moment outside Room 3210, then, having wound himself up, opened the door and walked in.

Thank Ford! he was not the last. Three chairs of the twelve arranged round the circular table were still unoccupied. He slipped into the nearest of them as inconspicuously as he could and prepared to frown at the yet later comers whenever they should arrive.

Turning towards him, "What were you playing this afternoon?" the girl on his left enquired. "Obstacle, or Electro-magnetic?"

Bernard looked at her (Ford! it was Morgana Rothschild) and blushingly had to admit that he had been playing neither. Morgana stared at him with astonishment. There was an awkward silence.

Then pointedly she turned away and addressed herself to the more sporting man on her left.

"A good beginning for a Solidarity Service," thought Bernard miserably, and foresaw for himself yet another failure to achieve atonement. If only he had given himself time to look around instead of scuttling for the nearest chair! He could have sat between Fifi Bradlaugh and Joanna Diesel. Instead of which he had gone and blindly planted himself next to Morgana. *Morgana*! Ford! Those black eyebrows of hers—that eyebrow, rather—for they met above the nose. Ford! And on his right was Clara Deterding. True, Clara's eyebrows didn't meet. But she was really too pneumatic. Whereas Fifi and Joanna were absolutely right. Plump, blonde, not too large … And it was that great lout, Tom Kawaguchi, who now took the seat between them.

The last arrival was Sarojini Engels.

"You're late," said the President of the Group severely. "Don't let it happen again."

Sarojini apologized and slid into her place between Jim Bokanovsky and Herbert Bakunin. The group was now complete, the solidarity circle perfect and without flaw. Man, woman, man, in a ring of endless alternation round the table. Twelve of them ready to be made one, waiting to come together, to be fused, to lose their twelve separate identities in a larger being.

The President stood up, made the sign of the T and, switching on the synthetic music, let loose the soft indefatigable beating of drums and a choir of instruments—near-wind and super-string—that plangently repeated and repeated the brief and unescapably haunting melody of the first Solidarity Hymn. Again, again—and it was not the ear that heard the pulsing rhythm, it was the midriff; the wail and clang of those recurring harmonies haunted, not the mind, but the yearning bowels of compassion.

The President made another sign of the T and sat down. The service had begun. The dedicated *soma* tablets were placed in the centre of the table. The loving cup of strawberry ice-cream *soma* was passed from hand to hand and, with the formula, "I drink to my annihilation," twelve times quaffed. Then to the accompaniment of the synthetic orchestra the First Solidarity Hymn was sung.

"Ford, we are twelve; oh, make us one,
Like drops within the Social River,
Oh, make us now together run
As swiftly as thy shining Flivver."

Twelve yearning stanzas. And then the loving cup was passed a second time. "I drink to the Greater Being" was now the formula. All drank. Tirelessly the music played. The drums beat. The crying and

clashing of the harmonies were an obsession in the melted bowels. The Second Solidarity Hymn was sung.

“Come, Greater Being, Social Friend,
Annihilating Twelve-in-One!
We long to die, for when we end,
Our larger life has but begun.”

Again twelve stanzas. By this time the *soma* had begun to work. Eyes shone, cheeks were flushed, the inner light of universal benevolence broke out on every face in happy, friendly smiles. Even Bernard felt himself a little melted. When Morgana Rothschild turned and beamed at him, he did his best to beam back. But the eyebrow, that black two-in-one—alas, it was still there; he couldn’t ignore it, couldn’t, however hard he tried. The melting hadn’t gone far enough. Perhaps if he had been sitting between Fifi and Joanna … For the third time the loving cup went round; “I drink to the imminence of His Coming,” said Morgana Rothschild, whose turn it happened to be to initiate the circular rite. Her tone was loud, exultant. She drank and passed the cup to Bernard. “I drink to the imminence of His Coming,” he repeated, with a sincere attempt to feel that the coming was imminent; but the eyebrow continued to haunt him, and the Coming, so far as he was concerned, was horribly remote. He drank and handed the cup to Clara Deterding. “It’ll be a failure again,” he said to himself. “I know it will.” But he went on doing his best to beam.

The loving cup had made its circuit. Lifting his hand, the President gave a signal; the chorus broke out into the third Solidarity Hymn.

“Feel how the Greater Being comes!
Rejoice and, in rejoicings, die!
Melt in the music of the drums!
For I am you and you are I.”

As verse succeeded verse the voices thrilled with an ever intenser excitement. The sense of the Coming’s imminence was like an electric tension in the air. The President switched off the music and, with the final note of the final stanza, there was absolute silence—the silence of stretched expectancy, quivering and creeping with a galvanic life. The President reached out his hand; and suddenly a Voice, a deep strong Voice, more musical than any merely human voice, richer, warmer, more vibrant with love and yearning and compassion, a wonderful, mysterious, supernatural Voice spoke from above their heads. Very slowly, “Oh, Ford, Ford, Ford,” it said diminishingly and on a descending scale. A sensation of warmth radiated thrillingly out from the solar plexus to every extremity of the bodies of those who listened; tears came into their eyes; their hearts, their bowels seemed to move within them, as though with an independent life. “Ford!” they were melting, “Ford!” dissolved, dissolved. Then, in another tone, suddenly, startlingly. “Listen!” trumpeted the voice. “Listen!” They listened. After a pause, sunk to a whisper, but a whisper, somehow, more penetrating than the loudest cry. “The feet of the Greater Being,” it went on, and repeated the words: “The feet of the Greater Being.” The whisper almost expired. “The feet of the Greater Being are on the stairs.” And once more there was silence; and the expectancy, momentarily relaxed, was stretched again, tauter, tauter, almost to the tearing point. The feet of the Greater Being—oh, they heard them, they heard them, coming softly down the stairs, coming nearer and nearer down the invisible stairs. The feet of the Greater Being. And suddenly the tearing point was reached. Her eyes staring, her lips parted. Morgana Rothschild sprang to her feet.

“I hear him,” she cried. “I hear him.”

“He’s coming,” shouted Sarojini Engels.

“Yes, he’s coming, I hear him.” Fifi Bradlaugh and Tom Kawaguchi rose simultaneously to their feet.

“Oh, oh, oh!” Joanna inarticulately testified.

“He’s coming!” yelled Jim Bokanovsky.

The President leaned forward and, with a touch, released a delirium of cymbals and blown brass, a fever of tom-tomming.

“Oh, he’s coming!” screamed Clara Deterding. “Aie!” and it was as though she were having her throat cut.

Feeling that it was time for him to do something, Bernard also jumped up and shouted: “I hear him; He’s coming.” But it wasn’t true. He heard nothing and, for him, nobody was coming. Nobody—in spite of the music, in spite of the mounting excitement. But he waved his arms, he shouted with the best of them; and when the others began to jig and stamp and shuffle, he also jigged and shuffled.

Round they went, a circular procession of dancers, each with hands on the hips of the dancer preceding, round and round, shouting in unison, stamping to the rhythm of the music with their feet, beating it, beating it out with hands on the buttocks in front; twelve pairs of hands beating as one; as one, twelve buttocks slabbily resounding. Twelve as one, twelve as one. “I hear Him, I hear Him coming.” The music quickened; faster beat the feet, faster, faster fell the rhythmic hands. And all at once a great synthetic bass boomed out the words which announced the approaching atonement and final consummation of solidarity, the coming of the Twelve-in-One, the incarnation of the Greater Being. “Orgy-porgy,” it sang, while the tom-toms continued to beat their feverish tattoo:

“Orgy-porgy, Ford and fun,
Kiss the girls and make them One.
Boys at One with girls at peace;
Orgy-porgy gives release.”

“Orgy-porgy,” the dancers caught up the liturgical refrain, “Orgy-porgy, Ford and fun, kiss the girls …” And as they sang, the lights began slowly to fade—to fade and at the same time to grow warmer, richer, redder, until at last they were dancing in the crimson twilight of an Embryo Store. “Orgy-porgy …” In their blood-coloured and foetal darkness the dancers continued for a while to circulate, to beat and beat out the indefatigable rhythm. “Orgy-porgy …” Then the circle wavered, broke, fell in partial disintegration on the ring of couches which surrounded—circle enclosing circle—the table and its planetary chairs. “Orgy-porgy …” Tenderly the deep Voice crooned and cooed; in the red twilight it was as though some enormous negro dove were hovering benevolently over the now prone or supine dancers.

They were standing on the roof; Big Henry had just sung eleven. The night was calm and warm.

“Wasn’t it wonderful?” said Fifi Bradlaugh. “Wasn’t it simply wonderful?” She looked at Bernard with an expression of rapture, but of rapture in which there was no trace of agitation or excitement—for to be excited is still to be unsatisfied. Hers was the calm ecstasy of achieved consummation, the peace, not of mere vacant satiety and nothingness, but of balanced life, of energies at rest and in equilibrium. A rich and living peace. For the Solidarity Service had given as well as taken, drawn off only to replenish. She was full, she was made perfect, she was still more than merely herself. “Didn’t you think it was wonderful?” she insisted, looking into Bernard’s face with those supernaturally shining eyes.

“Yes, I thought it was wonderful,” he lied and looked away; the sight of her transfigured face was at once an accusation and an ironical reminder of his own separateness. He was as miserably isolated now as he had been when the service began—more isolated by reason of his unreplenished emptiness, his dead satiety. Separate and unatoned, while the others were being fused into the Greater Being; alone even in Morgana’s embrace—much more alone, indeed, more hopelessly himself than he had ever been in his life before. He had emerged from that crimson twilight into the common electric glare with a self-consciousness intensified to the pitch of agony. He was utterly miserable, and perhaps (her shining eyes accused him), perhaps it was his own fault. “Quite wonderful,” he repeated; but the only thing he could think of was Morgana’s eyebrow.

196.

Brave New World: Chapter 6

Aldous Huxley

§1

ODD, ODD, *odd*, was Lenina's verdict on Bernard Marx. So odd, indeed, that in the course of the succeeding weeks she had wondered more than once whether she shouldn't change her mind about the New Mexico holiday, and go instead to the North Pole with Benito Hoover. The trouble was that she knew the North Pole, had been there with George Edzel only last summer, and what was more, found it pretty grim. Nothing to do, and the hotel too hopelessly old-fashioned–no television laid on in the bedrooms, no scent organ, only the most putrid synthetic music, and not more than twenty-five Escalator-Squash Courts for over two hundred guests. No, decidedly she couldn't face the North Pole again. Added to which, she had only been to America once before. And even then, how inadequately! A cheap week-end in New York–had it been with Jean-Jacques Habibullah or Bokanovsky Jones? She couldn't remember. Anyhow, it was of absolutely no importance. The prospect of flying West again, and for a whole week, was very inviting. Moreover, for at least three days of that week they would be in the Savage Reservation. Not more than half a dozen people in the whole Centre had ever been inside a Savage Reservation. As an Alpha-Plus psychologist, Bernard was one of the few men she knew entitled to a permit. For Lenina, the opportunity was unique. And yet, so unique also was Bernard's oddness that she had hesitated to take it, had actually thought of risking the Pole again with funny old Benito. At least Benito was normal. Whereas Bernard …

"Alcohol in his blood-surrogate," was Fanny's explanation of every eccentricity. But Henry, with whom, one evening when they were in bed together, Lenina had rather anxiously discussed her new lover, Henry had compared poor Bernard to a rhinoceros.

"You can't teach a rhinoceros tricks," he had explained in his brief and vigorous style. "Some men are almost rhinoceroses; they don't respond properly to conditioning. Poor Devils! Bernard's one of them. Luckily for him, he's pretty good at his job. Otherwise the Director would never have kept him. However," he added consolingly, "I think he's pretty harmless."

Pretty harmless, perhaps; but also pretty disquieting. That mania, to start with, for doing things in private. Which meant, in practice, not doing anything at all. For what was there that one *could* do in private. (Apart, of course, from going to bed: but one couldn't do that all the time.) Yes, what was there? Precious little. The first afternoon they went out together was particularly fine. Lenina had suggested a swim at Toquay Country Club followed by dinner at the Oxford Union. But Bernard thought there would be too much of a crowd. Then what about a round of Electro-magnetic Golf at St. Andrew's? But again, no: Bernard considered that Electro-magnetic Golf was a waste of time.

"Then what's time for?" asked Lenina in some astonishment.

Apparently, for going walks in the Lake District; for that was what he now proposed. Land on the top of Skiddaw and walk for a couple of hours in the heather. "Alone with you, Lenina."

"But, Bernard, we shall be alone all night."

Bernard blushed and looked away. “I meant, alone for talking,” he mumbled.

“Talking? But what about?” Walking and talking–that seemed a very odd way of spending an afternoon.

In the end she persuaded him, much against his will, to fly over to Amsterdam to see the Semi-Demi-Finals of the Women’s Heavyweight Wrestling Championship.

“In a crowd,” he grumbled. “As usual.” He remained obstinately gloomy the whole afternoon; wouldn’t talk to Lenina’s friends (of whom they met dozens in the ice-cream *soma* bar between the wrestling bouts); and in spite of his misery absolutely refused to take the half-gramme raspberry sundae which she pressed upon him. “I’d rather be myself,” he said. “Myself and nasty. Not somebody else, however jolly.”

“A gramme in time saves nine,” said Lenina, producing a bright treasure of sleep-taught wisdom. Bernard pushed away the proffered glass impatiently.

“Now don’t lose your temper,” she said. “Remember one cubic centimetre cures ten gloomy sentiments.”

“Oh, for Ford’s sake, be quiet!” he shouted.

Lenina shrugged her shoulders. “A gramme is always better than a damn,” she concluded with dignity, and drank the sundae herself.

On their way back across the Channel, Bernard insisted on stopping his propeller and hovering on his helicopter screws within a hundred feet of the waves. The weather had taken a change for the worse; a southwesterly wind had sprung up, the sky was cloudy.

“Look,” he commanded.

“But it’s horrible,” said Lenina, shrinking back from the window. She was appalled by the rushing emptiness of the night, by the black foam-flecked water heaving beneath them, by the pale face of the moon, so haggard and distracted among the hastening clouds. “Let’s turn on the radio. Quick!” She reached for the dialling knob on the dash-board and turned it at random.

“… skies are blue inside of you,” sang sixteen tremoloing falsettos, “the weather’s always …”

Then a hiccough and silence. Bernard had switched off the current.

“I want to look at the sea in peace,” he said. “One can’t even look with that beastly noise going on.”

“But it’s lovely. And I don’t want to look.”

“But I do,” he insisted. “It makes me feel as though …” he hesitated, searching for words with which to express himself, “as though I were more *me*, if you see what I mean. More on my own, not so completely a part of something else. Not just a cell in the social body. Doesn’t it make you feel like that, Lenina?”

But Lenina was crying. “It’s horrible, it’s horrible,” she kept repeating. “And how can you talk like that about not wanting to be a part of the social body? After all, every one works for every one else. We can’t do without any one. Even Epsilons …”

“Yes, I know,” said Bernard derisively. ‘”Even Epsilons are useful’! So am I. And I damned well wish I weren’t!”

Lenina was shocked by his blasphemy. “Bernard!” She protested in a voice of amazed distress. “How can you?”

In a different key, “How can I?” he repeated meditatively. “No, the real problem is: How is it that I can’t, or rather–because, after all, I know quite well why I can’t–what would it be like if I could, if I were free–not enslaved by my conditioning.”

“But, Bernard, you’re saying the most awful things.”

“Don’t you wish you were free, Lenina?”

“I don’t know what you mean. I am free. Free to have the most wonderful time. Everybody’s happy nowadays.”

He laughed, “Yes, ‘Everybody’s happy nowadays.’ We begin giving the children that at five. But wouldn’t you like to be free to be happy in some other way, Lenina? In your own way, for example; not in everybody else’s way.”

“I don’t know what you mean,” she repeated. Then, turning to him, “Oh, do let’s go back, Bernard,” she besought; “I do so hate it here.”

“Don’t you like being with me?”

“But of course, Bernard. It’s this horrible place.”

“I thought we’d be more … more *together* here–with nothing but the sea and moon. More together than in that crowd, or even in my rooms. Don’t you understand that?”

“I don’t understand anything,” she said with decision, determined to preserve her incomprehension intact. “Nothing. Least of all,” she continued in another tone “why you don’t take *soma* when you have these dreadful ideas of yours. You’d forget all about them. And instead of feeling miserable, you’d be jolly. *So* jolly,” she repeated and smiled, for all the puzzled anxiety in her eyes, with what was meant to be an inviting and voluptuous cajolery.

He looked at her in silence, his face unresponsive and very grave–looked at her intently. After a few seconds Lenina’s eyes flinched away; she uttered a nervous little laugh, tried to think of something to say and couldn’t. The silence prolonged itself.

When Bernard spoke at last, it was in a small tired voice. “All right then,” he said, “we’ll go back.” And stepping hard on the accelerator, he sent the machine rocketing up into the sky. At four thousand he started his propeller. They flew in silence for a minute or two. Then, suddenly, Bernard began to laugh. Rather oddly, Lenina thought, but still, it was laughter.

“Feeling better?” she ventured to ask.

For answer, he lifted one hand from the controls and, slipping his arm around her, began to fondle her breasts.

“Thank Ford,” she said to herself, “he’s all right again.”

Half an hour later they were back in his rooms. Bernard swallowed four tablets of *soma* at a gulp, turned on the radio and television and began to undress.

“Well,” Lenina enquired, with significant archness when they met next afternoon on the roof, “did you think it was fun yesterday?”

Bernard nodded. They climbed into the plane. A little jolt, and they were off.

“Every one says I’m awfully pneumatic,” said Lenina reflectively, patting her own legs.

“Awfully.” But there was an expression of pain in Bernard’s eyes. “Like meat,” he was thinking.

She looked up with a certain anxiety. “But you don’t think I’m too plump, do you?”

He shook his head. Like so much meat.

“You think I’m all right.” Another nod. “In every way?”

“Perfect,” he said aloud. And inwardly. “She thinks of herself that way. She doesn’t mind being meat.”

Lenina smiled triumphantly. But her satisfaction was premature.

“All the same,” he went on, after a little pause, “I still rather wish it had all ended differently.”

“Differently?” Were there other endings?

“I didn’t want it to end with our going to bed,” he specified.

Lenina was astonished.

“Not at once, not the first day.”

“But then what …?”

He began to talk a lot of incomprehensible and dangerous nonsense. Lenina did her best to stop the ears of her mind; but every now and then a phrase would insist on becoming audible. “… to try the effect of arresting my impulses,” she heard him say. The words seemed to touch a spring in her mind.

“Never put off till to-morrow the fun you can have to-day,” she said gravely.

"Two hundred repetitions, twice a week from fourteen to sixteen and a half," was all his comment. The mad bad talk rambled on. "I want to know what passion is," she heard him saying. "I want to feel something strongly."

"When the individual feels, the community reels," Lenina pronounced.

"Well, why shouldn't it reel a bit?"

"Bernard!"

But Bernard remained unabashed.

"Adults intellectually and during working hours," he went on. "Infants where feeling and desire are concerned."

"Our Ford loved infants."

Ignoring the interruption. "It suddenly struck me the other day," continued Bernard, "that it might be possible to be an adult all the time."

"I don't understand." Lenina's tone was firm.

"I know you don't. And that's why we went to bed together yesterday–like infants–instead of being adults and waiting."

"But it was fun," Lenina insisted. "Wasn't it?"

"Oh, the greatest fun," he answered, but in a voice so mournful, with an expression so profoundly miserable, that Lenina felt all her triumph suddenly evaporate. Perhaps he had found her too plump, after all.

"I told you so," was all that Fanny said, when Lenina came and made her confidences. "It's the alcohol they put in his surrogate."

"All the same," Lenina insisted. "I do like him. He has such awfully nice hands. And the way he moves his shoulders–that's very attractive." She sighed. "But I wish he weren't so odd."

§2

HALTING for a moment outside the door of the Director's room, Bernard drew a deep breath and squared his shoulders, bracing himself to meet the dislike and disapproval which he was certain of finding within. He knocked and entered.

"A permit for you to initial, Director," he said as airily as possible, and laid the paper on the writing-table.

The Director glanced at him sourly. But the stamp of the World Controller's Office was at the head of the paper and the signature of Mustapha Mond, bold and black, across the bottom. Everything was perfectly in order. The director had no choice. He pencilled his initials–two small pale letters abject at the feet of Mustapha Mond–and was about to return the paper without a word of comment or genial Ford-speed, when his eye was caught by something written in the body of the permit.

"For the New Mexican Reservation?" he said, and his tone, the face he lifted to Bernard, expressed a kind of agitated astonishment.

Surprised by his surprise, Bernard nodded. There was a silence.

The Director leaned back in his chair, frowning. "How long ago was it?" he said, speaking more to himself than to Bernard. "Twenty years, I suppose. Nearer twenty-five. I must have been your age …" He sighed and shook his head.

Bernard felt extremely uncomfortable. A man so conventional, so scrupulously correct as the Director–and to commit so gross a solecism! It made him want to hide his face, to run out of the room. Not that he himself saw anything intrinsically objectionable in people talking about the remote past; that

was one of those hypnopaedic prejudices he had (so he imagined) completely got rid of. What made him feel shy was the knowledge that the Director disapproved-disapproved and yet had been betrayed into doing the forbidden thing. Under what inward compulsion? Through his discomfort Bernard eagerly listened.

"I had the same idea as you," the Director was saying. "Wanted to have a look at the savages. Got a permit for New Mexico and went there for my summer holiday. With the girl I was having at the moment. She was a Beta-Minus, and I think" (he shut his eyes), "I think she had yellow hair. Anyhow she was pneumatic, particularly pneumatic; I remember that. Well, we went there, and we looked at the savages, and we rode about on horses and all that. And then–it was almost the last day of my leave–then … well, she got lost. We'd gone riding up one of those revolting mountains, and it was horribly hot and oppressive, and after lunch we went to sleep. Or at least I did. She must have gone for a walk, alone. At any rate, when I woke up, she wasn't there. And the most frightful thunderstorm I've ever seen was just bursting on us. And it poured and roared and flashed; and the horses broke loose and ran away; and I fell down, trying to catch them, and hurt my knee, so that I could hardly walk. Still, I searched and I shouted and I searched. But there was no sign of her. Then I thought she must have gone back to the rest-house by herself. So I crawled down into the valley by the way we had come. My knee was agonizingly painful, and I'd lost my *soma*. It took me hours. I didn't get back to the rest-house till after midnight. And she wasn't there; she wasn't there," the Director repeated. There was a silence. "Well," he resumed at last, "the next day there was a search. But we couldn't find her. She must have fallen into a gully somewhere; or been eaten by a mountain lion. Ford knows. Anyhow it was horrible. It upset me very much at the time. More than it ought to have done, I dare say. Because, after all, it's the sort of accident that might have happened to any one; and, of course, the social body persists although the component cells may change." But this sleep-taught consolation did not seem to be very effective. Shaking his head, "I actually dream about it sometimes," the Director went on in a low voice. "Dream of being woken up by that peal of thunder and finding her gone; dream of searching and searching for her under the trees." He lapsed into the silence of reminiscence.

"You must have had a terrible shock," said Bernard, almost enviously.

At the sound of his voice the Director started into a guilty realization of where he was; shot a glance at Bernard, and averting his eyes, blushed darkly; looked at him again with sudden suspicion and, angrily on his dignity, "Don't imagine," he said, "that I'd had any indecorous relation with the girl. Nothing emotional, nothing long-drawn. It was all perfectly healthy and normal." He handed Bernard the permit. "I really don't know why I bored you with this trivial anecdote." Furious with himself for having given away a discreditable secret, he vented his rage on Bernard. The look in his eyes was now frankly malignant. "And I should like to take this opportunity, Mr. Marx," he went on, "of saying that I'm not at all pleased with the reports I receive of your behaviour outside working hours. You may say that this is not my business. But it is. I have the good name of the Centre to think of. My workers must be above suspicion, particularly those of the highest castes. Alphas are so conditioned that they do not have to be infantile in their emotional behaviour. But that is all the more reason for their making a special effort to conform. It is their duty to be infantile, even against their inclination. And so, Mr. Marx, I give you fair warning." The Director's voice vibrated with an indignation that had now become wholly righteous and impersonal–was the expression of the disapproval of Society itself. "If ever I hear again of any lapse from a proper standard of infantile decorum, I shall ask for your transference to a Sub-Centre–preferably to Iceland. Good morning." And swivelling round in his chair, he picked up his pen and began to write.

"That'll teach him," he said to himself. But he was mistaken. For Bernard left the room with a swagger, exulting, as he banged the door behind him, in the thought that he stood alone, embattled against the order of things; elated by the intoxicating consciousness of his individual significance and importance. Even the thought of persecution left him undismayed, was rather tonic than depressing.

He felt strong enough to meet and overcome affliction, strong enough to face even Iceland. And this confidence was the greater for his not for a moment really believing that he would be called upon to face anything at all. People simply weren't transferred for things like that. Iceland was just a threat. A most stimulating and life-giving threat. Walking along the corridor, he actually whistled.

Heroic was the account he gave that evening of his interview with the D.H.C. "Whereupon," it concluded, "I simply told him to go to the Bottomless Past and marched out of the room. And that was that." He looked at Helmholtz Watson expectantly, awaiting his due reward of sympathy, encouragement, admiration. But no word came. Helmholtz sat silent, staring at the floor.

He liked Bernard; he was grateful to him for being the only man of his acquaintance with whom he could talk about the subjects he felt to be important. Nevertheless, there were things in Bernard which he hated. This boasting, for example. And the outbursts of an abject self-pity with which it alternated. And his deplorable habit of being bold after the event, and full, in absence, of the most extraordinary presence of mind. He hated these things–just because he liked Bernard. The seconds passed. Helmholtz continued to stare at the floor. And suddenly Bernard blushed and turned away.

§3

THE journey was quite uneventful. The Blue Pacific Rocket was two and a half minutes early at New Orleans, lost four minutes in a tornado over Texas, but flew into a favourable air current at Longitude 95 West, and was able to land at Santa Fé less than forty seconds behind schedule time.

"Forty seconds on a six and a half hour flight. Not so bad," Lenina conceded.

They slept that night at Santa Fé. The hotel was excellent–incomparably better, for example, than that horrible Aurora Bora Palace in which Lenina had suffered so much the previous summer. Liquid air, television, vibro-vacuum massage, radio, boiling caffeine solution, hot contraceptives, and eight different kinds of scent were laid on in every bedroom. The synthetic music plant was working as they entered the hall and left nothing to be desired. A notice in the lift announced that there were sixty Escalator-Squash-Racket Courts in the hotel, and that Obstacle and Electro-magnetic Golf could both be played in the park.

"But it sounds simply too lovely," cried Lenina. "I almost wish we could stay here. Sixty Escalator-Squash Courts …"

"There won't be any in the Reservation," Bernard warned her. "And no scent, no television, no hot water even. If you feel you can't stand it, stay here till I come back."

Lenina was quite offended. "Of course I can stand it. I only said it was lovely here because … well, because progress is lovely, isn't it?"

"Five hundred repetitions once a week from thirteen to seventeen," said Bernard wearily, as though to himself.

"What did you say?"

"I said that progress was lovely. That's why you mustn't come to the Reservation unless you really want to."

"But I do want to."

"Very well, then," said Bernard; and it was almost a threat.

Their permit required the signature of the Warden of the Reservation, at whose office next morning they duly presented themselves. An Epsilon-Plus negro porter took in Bernard's card, and they were admitted almost immediately.

The Warden was a blond and brachycephalic Alpha-Minus, short, red, moon-faced, and broad-

shouldered, with a loud booming voice, very well adapted to the utterance of hypnopaedic wisdom. He was a mine of irrelevant information and unasked-for good advice. Once started, he went on and on–boomingly.

"… five hundred and sixty thousand square kilometres, divided into four distinct Sub-Reservations, each surrounded by a high-tension wire fence."

At this moment, and for no apparent reason, Bernard suddenly remembered that he had left the Eau de Cologne tap in his bathroom wide open and running.

"… supplied with current from the Grand Canyon hydro-electric station."

"Cost me a fortune by the time I get back." With his mind's eye, Bernard saw the needle on the scent meter creeping round and round, antlike, indefatigable. "Quickly telephone to Helmholtz Watson."

"… upwards of five thousand kilometres of fencing at sixty thousand volts."

"You don't say so," said Lenina politely, not knowing in the least what the Warden had said, but taking her cue from his dramatic pause. When the Warden started booming, she had inconspicuously swallowed half a gramme of *soma*, with the result that she could now sit, serenely not listening, thinking of nothing at all, but with her large blue eyes fixed on the Warden's face in an expression of rapt attention.

"To touch the fence is instant death," pronounced the Warden solemnly. "There is no escape from a Savage Reservation."

The word "escape" was suggestive. "Perhaps," said Bernard, half rising, "we ought to think of going." The little black needle was scurrying, an insect, nibbling through time, eating into his money.

"No escape," repeated the Warden, waving him back into his chair; and as the permit was not yet countersigned Bernard had no choice but to obey. "Those who are born in the Reservation–and remember, my dear young lady," he added, leering obscenely at Lenina, and speaking in an improper whisper, "remember that, in the Reservation, children still *are* born, yes, actually born, revolting as that may seem …" (He hoped that this reference to a shameful subject would make Lenina blush; but she only smiled with simulated intelligence and said, "You don't say so!" Disappointed, the Warden began again.) "Those, I repeat who are born in the Reservation are destined to die there."

Destined to die … A decilitre of Eau de Cologne every minute. Six litres an hour. "Perhaps," Bernard tried again, "we ought …"

Leaning forward, the Warden tapped the table with his forefinger. "You ask me how many people live in the Reservation. And I reply"–triumphantly–"I reply that we do not know. We can only guess."

"You don't say so."

"My dear young lady, I do say so."

Six times twenty-four–no, it would be nearer six times thirty-six. Bernard was pale and trembling with impatience. But inexorably the booming continued.

"… about sixty thousand Indians and half-breeds … absolute savages … our inspectors occasionally visit … otherwise, no communication whatever with the civilized world … still preserve their repulsive habits and customs … marriage, if you know what that is, my dear young lady; families … no conditioning … monstrous superstitions … Christianity and totemism and ancestor worship … extinct languages, such as *Zuñi* and Spanish and Athapascan … pumas, porcupines and other ferocious animals … infectious diseases … priests … venomous lizards …"

"You don't say so?"

They got away at last. Bernard dashed to the telephone. Quick, quick; but it took him nearly three minutes to get on to Helmholtz Watson. "We might be among the savages already," he complained. "Damned incompetence!"

"Have a gramme," suggested Lenina.

He refused, preferring his anger. And at last, thank Ford, he was through and, yes, it was Helmholtz; Helmholtz, to whom he explained what had happened, and who promised to go round at once, at once,

and turn off the tap, yes, at once, but took this opportunity to tell him what the D.H.C. had said, in public, yesterday evening …

"What? He's looking out for some one to take my place?" Bernard's voice was agonized. "So it's actually decided? Did he mention Iceland? You say he did? Ford! Iceland …" He hung up the receiver and turned back to Lenina. His face was pale, his expression utterly dejected.

"What's the matter?" she asked.

"The matter?" He dropped heavily into a chair. "I'm going to be sent to Iceland."

Often in the past he had wondered what it would be like to be subjected (*soma*-less and with nothing but his own inward resources to rely on) to some great trial, some pain, some persecution; he had even longed for affliction. As recently as a week ago, in the Director's office, he had imagined himself courageously resisting, stoically accepting suffering without a word. The Director's threats had actually elated him, made him feel larger than life. But that, as he now realized, was because he had not taken the threats quite seriously, he had not believed that, when it came to the point, the D.H.C. would ever do anything. Now that it looked as though the threats were really to be fulfilled, Bernard was appalled. Of that imagined stoicism, that theoretical courage, not a trace was left.

He raged against himself–what a fool–against the Director–how unfair not to give him that other chance, that other chance which, he now had no doubt at all, he had always intended to take. And Iceland, Iceland …

Lenina shook her head. "Was and will make me ill," she quoted, "I take a gramme and only am."

In the end she persuaded him to swallow four tablets of *soma*. Five minutes later roots and fruits were abolished; the flower of the present rosily blossomed. A message from the porter announced that, at the Warden's orders, a Reservation Guard had come round with a plane and was waiting on the roof of the hotel. They went up at once. An octoroon in Gamma-green uniform saluted and proceeded to recite the morning's programme.

A bird's-eye view of ten or a dozen of the principal pueblos, then a landing for lunch in the valley of Malpais. The rest-house was comfortable there, and up at the pueblo the savages would probably be celebrating their summer festival. It would be the best place to spend the night.

They took their seats in the plane and set off. Ten minutes later they were crossing the frontier that separated civilization from savagery. Uphill and down, across the deserts of salt or sand, through forests, into the violet depth of canyons, over crag and peak and table-topped mesa, the fence marched on and on, irresistibly the straight line, the geometrical symbol of triumphant human purpose. And at its foot, here and there, a mosaic of white bones, a still unrotted carcase dark on the tawny ground marked the place where deer or steer, puma or porcupine or coyote, or the greedy turkey buzzards drawn down by the whiff of carrion and fulminated as though by a poetic justice, had come too close to the destroying wires.

"They never learn," said the green-uniformed pilot, pointing down at the skeletons on the ground below them. "And they never will learn," he added and laughed, as though he had somehow scored a personal triumph over the electrocuted animals.

Bernard also laughed; after two grammes of *soma* the joke seemed, for some reason, good. Laughed and then, almost immediately, dropped off to sleep, and sleeping was carried over Taos and Tesuque; over Nambe and Picuris and Pojoaque, over Sia and Cochiti, over Laguna and Acoma and the Enchanted Mesa, over Zuhi and Cibola and Ojo Caliente, and woke at last to find the machine standing on the ground, Lenina carrying the suit-cases into a small square house, and the Gamma-green octoroon talking incomprehensibly with a young Indian.

"Malpais," explained the pilot, as Bernard stepped out. "This is the rest-house. And there's a dance this afternoon at the pueblo. He'll take you there." He pointed to the sullen young savage. "Funny, I expect." He grinned. "Everything they do is funny." And with that he climbed into the plane and started

up the engines. “Back to-morrow. And remember,” he added reassuringly to Lenina, “they’re perfectly tame; savages won’t do you any harm. They’ve got enough experience of gas bombs to know that they mustn’t play any tricks.” Still laughing, he threw the helicopter screws into gear, accelerated, and was gone.

197.

Brave New World: Chapter 7

Aldous Huxley

THE MESA was like a ship becalmed in a strait of lion-coloured dust. The channel wound between precipitous banks, and slanting from one wall to the other across the valley ran a streak of green—the river and its fields. On the prow of that stone ship in the centre of the strait, and seemingly a part of it, a shaped and geometrical outcrop of the naked rock, stood the pueblo of Malpais. Block above block, each story smaller than the one below, the tall houses rose like stepped and amputated pyramids into the blue sky. At their feet lay a straggle of low buildings, a criss-cross of walls; and on three sides the precipices fell sheer into the plain. A few columns of smoke mounted perpendicularly into the windless air and were lost.

"Queer," said Lenina. "Very queer." It was her ordinary word of condemnation. "I don't like it. And I don't like that man." She pointed to the Indian guide who had been appointed to take them up to the pueblo. Her feeling was evidently reciprocated; the very back of the man, as he walked along before them, was hostile, sullenly contemptuous.

"Besides," she lowered her voice, "he smells."

Bernard did not attempt to deny it. They walked on.

Suddenly it was as though the whole air had come alive and were pulsing, pulsing with the indefatigable movement of blood. Up there, in Malpais, the drums were being beaten. Their feet fell in with the rhythm of that mysterious heart; they quickened their pace. Their path led them to the foot of the precipice. The sides of the great mesa ship towered over them, three hundred feet to the gunwale.

"I wish we could have brought the plane," said Lenina, looking up resentfully at the blank impending rock-face. "I hate walking. And you feel so small when you're on the ground at the bottom of a hill."

They walked along for some way in the shadow of the mesa, rounded a projection, and there, in a water-worn ravine, was the way up the companion ladder. They climbed. It was a very steep path that zigzagged from side to side of the gully. Sometimes the pulsing of the drums was all but inaudible, at others they seemed to be beating only just round the corner.

When they were half-way up, an eagle flew past so close to them that the wind of his wings blew chill on their faces. In a crevice of the rock lay a pile of bones. It was all oppressively queer, and the Indian smelt stronger and stronger. They emerged at last from the ravine into the full sunlight. The top of the mesa was a flat deck of stone.

"Like the Charing-T Tower," was Lenina's comment. But she was not allowed to enjoy her discovery of this reassuring resemblance for long. A padding of soft feet made them turn round. Naked from throat to navel, their dark brown bodies painted with white lines ("like asphalt tennis courts," Lenina was later to explain), their faces inhuman with daubings of scarlet, black and ochre, two Indians came running along the path. Their black hair was braided with fox fur and red flannel. Cloaks of turkey feathers fluttered from their shoulders; huge feather diadems exploded gaudily round their heads. With every step they took came the clink and rattle of their silver bracelets, their heavy necklaces of bone and turquoise beads. They came on without a word, running quietly in their deerskin moccasins. One of them was

holding a feather brush; the other carried, in either hand, what looked at a distance like three or four pieces of thick rope. One of the ropes writhed uneasily, and suddenly Lenina saw that they were snakes.

The men came nearer and nearer; their dark eyes looked at her, but without giving any sign of recognition, any smallest sign that they had seen her or were aware of her existence. The writhing snake hung limp again with the rest. The men passed.

"I don't like it," said Lenina. "I don't like it."

She liked even less what awaited her at the entrance to the pueblo, where their guide had left them while he went inside for instructions. The dirt, to start with, the piles of rubbish, the dust, the dogs, the flies. Her face wrinkled up into a grimace of disgust. She held her handkerchief to her nose.

"But how can they live like this?" she broke out in a voice of indignant incredulity. (It wasn't possible.)

Bernard shrugged his shoulders philosophically. "Anyhow," he said, "they've been doing it for the last five or six thousand years. So I suppose they must be used to it by now."

"But cleanliness is next to fordliness," she insisted.

"Yes, and civilization is sterilization," Bernard went on, concluding on a tone of irony the second hypnopaedic lesson in elementary hygiene. "But these people have never heard of Our Ford, and they aren't civilized. So there's no point in …"

"Oh!" She gripped his arm. "Look."

An almost naked Indian was very slowly climbing down the ladder from the first-floor terrace of a neighboring house—rung after rung, with the tremulous caution of extreme old age. His face was profoundly wrinkled and black, like a mask of obsidian. The toothless mouth had fallen in. At the corners of the lips, and on each side of the chin, a few long bristles gleamed almost white against the dark skin. The long unbraided hair hung down in grey wisps round his face. His body was bent and emaciated to the bone, almost fleshless. Very slowly he came down, pausing at each rung before he ventured another step.

"What's the matter with him?" whispered Lenina. Her eyes were wide with horror and amazement.

"He's old, that's all," Bernard answered as carelessly as he could. He too was startled; but he made an effort to seem unmoved.

"Old?" she repeated. "But the Director's old; lots of people are old; they're not like that."

"That's because we don't allow them to be like that. We preserve them from diseases. We keep their internal secretions artificially balanced at a youthful equilibrium. We don't permit their magnesium-calcium ratio to fall below what it was at thirty. We give them transfusion of young blood. We keep their metabolism permanently stimulated. So, of course, they don't look like that. Partly," he added, "because most of them die long before they reach this old creature's age. Youth almost unimpaired till sixty, and then, crack! the end."

But Lenina was not listening. She was watching the old man. Slowly, slowly he came down. His feet touched the ground. He turned. In their deep-sunken orbits his eyes were still extraordinarily bright. They looked at her for a long moment expressionlessly, without surprise, as though she had not been there at all. Then slowly, with bent back the old man hobbled past them and was gone.

"But it's terrible," Lenina whispered. "It's awful. We ought not to have come here." She felt in her pocket for her *soma*—only to discover that, by some unprecedented oversight, she had left the bottle down at the rest-house. Bernard's pockets were also empty.

Lenina was left to face the horrors of Malpais unaided. They came crowding in on her thick and fast. The spectacle of two young women giving breast to their babies made her blush and turn away her face. She had never seen anything so indecent in her life. And what made it worse was that, instead of tactfully ignoring it, Bernard proceeded to make open comments on this revoltingly viviparous scene. Ashamed,

now that the effects of the *soma* had worn off, of the weakness he had displayed that morning in the hotel, he went out of his way to show himself strong and unorthodox.

"What a wonderfully intimate relationship," he said, deliberately outrageous. "And what an intensity of feeling it must generate! I often think one may have missed something in not having had a mother. And perhaps you've missed something in not *being* a mother, Lenina. Imagine yourself sitting there with a little baby of your own. …"

"Bernard! How can you?" The passage of an old woman with ophthalmia and a disease of the skin distracted her from her indignation.

"Let's go away," she begged. "I don't like it."

But at this moment their guide came back and, beckoning them to follow, led the way down the narrow street between the houses. They rounded a corner. A dead dog was lying on a rubbish heap; a woman with a goitre was looking for lice in the hair of a small girl. Their guide halted at the foot of a ladder, raised his hand perpendicularly, then darted it horizontally forward. They did what he mutely commanded—climbed the ladder and walked through the doorway, to which it gave access, into a long narrow room, rather dark and smelling of smoke and cooked grease and long-worn, long-unwashed clothes. At the further end of the room was another doorway, through which came a shaft of sunlight and the noise, very loud and close, of the drums.

They stepped across the threshold and found themselves on a wide terrace. Below them, shut in by the tall houses, was the village square, crowded with Indians. Bright blankets, and feathers in black hair, and the glint of turquoise, and dark skins shining with heat. Lenina put her handkerchief to her nose again. In the open space at the centre of the square were two circular platforms of masonry and trampled clay—the roofs, it was evident, of underground chambers; for in the centre of each platform was an open hatchway, with a ladder emerging from the lower darkness. A sound of subterranean flute playing came up and was almost lost in the steady remorseless persistence of the drums.

Lenina liked the drums. Shutting her eyes she abandoned herself to their soft repeated thunder, allowed it to invade her consciousness more and more completely, till at last there was nothing left in the world but that one deep pulse of sound. It reminded her reassuringly of the synthetic noises made at Solidarity Services and Ford's Day celebrations. "Orgy-porgy," she whispered to herself. These drums beat out just the same rhythms.

There was a sudden startling burst of singing—hundreds of male voices crying out fiercely in harsh metallic unison. A few long notes and silence, the thunderous silence of the drums; then shrill, in a neighing treble, the women's answer. Then again the drums; and once more the men's deep savage affirmation of their manhood.

Queer—yes. The place was queer, so was the music, so were the clothes and the goitres and the skin diseases and the old people. But the performance itself—there seemed to be nothing specially queer about that.

"It reminds me of a lower-caste Community Sing," she told Bernard.

But a little later it was reminding her a good deal less of that innocuous function. For suddenly there had swarmed up from those round chambers underground a ghastly troop of monsters. Hideously masked or painted out of all semblance of humanity, they had tramped out a strange limping dance round the square; round and again round, singing as they went, round and round—each time a little faster; and the drums had changed and quickened their rhythm, so that it became like the pulsing of fever in the ears; and the crowd had begun to sing with the dancers, louder and louder; and first one woman had shrieked, and then another and another, as though they were being killed; and then suddenly the leader of the dancers broke out of the line, ran to a big wooden chest which was standing at one end of the square, raised the lid and pulled out a pair of black snakes. A great yell went up from the crowd, and all the other dancers ran towards him with outstretched hands. He tossed the snakes to the first-comers,

then dipped back into the chest for more. More and more, black snakes and brown and mottled—he flung them out. And then the dance began again on a different rhythm. Round and round they went with their snakes, snakily, with a soft undulating movement at the knees and hips. Round and round. Then the leader gave a signal, and one after another, all the snakes were flung down in the middle of the square; an old man came up from underground and sprinkled them with corn meal, and from the other hatchway came a woman and sprinkled them with water from a black jar. Then the old man lifted his hand and, startlingly, terrifyingly, there was absolute silence. The drums stopped beating, life seemed to have come to an end. The old man pointed towards the two hatchways that gave entrance to the lower world. And slowly, raised by invisible hands from below, there emerged from the one a painted image of an eagle, from the other that of a man, naked, and nailed to a cross. They hung there, seemingly self-sustained, as though watching. The old man clapped his hands. Naked but for a white cotton breech-cloth, a boy of about eighteen stepped out of the crowd and stood before him, his hands crossed over his chest, his head bowed. The old man made the sign of the cross over him and turned away. Slowly, the boy began to walk round the writhing heap of snakes. He had completed the first circuit and was half-way through the second when, from among the dancers, a tall man wearing the mask of a coyote and holding in his hand a whip of plaited leather, advanced towards him. The boy moved on as though unaware of the other's existence. The coyote-man raised his whip, there was a long moment of expectancy, then a swift movement, the whistle of the lash and its loud flat-sounding impact on the flesh. The boy's body quivered; but he made no sound, he walked on at the same slow, steady pace. The coyote struck again, again; and at every blow at first a gasp, and then a deep groan went up from the crowd. The boy walked. Twice, thrice, four times round he went. The blood was streaming. Five times round, six times round. Suddenly Lenina covered her face shish her hands and began to sob. "Oh, stop them, stop them!" she implored. But the whip fell and fell inexorably. Seven times round. Then all at once the boy staggered and, still without a sound, pitched forward on to his face. Bending over him, the old man touched his back with a long white feather, held it up for a moment, crimson, for the people to see then shook it thrice over the snakes. A few drops fell, and suddenly the drums broke out again into a panic of hurrying notes; there was a great shout. The dancers rushed forward, picked up the snakes and ran out of the square. Men, women, children, all the crowd ran after them. A minute later the square was empty, only the boy remained, prone where he had fallen, quite still. Three old women came out of one of the houses, and with some difficulty lifted him and carried him in. The eagle and the man on the cross kept guard for a little while over the empty pueblo; then, as though they had seen enough, sank slowly down through their hatchways, out of sight, into the nether world.

Lenina was still sobbing. "Too awful," she kept repeating, and all Bernard's consolations were in vain. "Too awful! That blood!" She shuddered. "Oh, I wish I had my *soma*."

There was the sound of feet in the inner room.

Lenina did not move, but sat with her face in her hands, unseeing, apart. Only Bernard turned round.

The dress of the young man who now stepped out on to the terrace was Indian; but his plaited hair was straw-coloured, his eyes a pale blue, and his skin a white skin, bronzed.

"Hullo. Good-morrow," said the stranger, in faultless but peculiar English. "You're civilized, aren't you? You come from the Other Place, outside the Reservation?"

"Who on earth … ?" Bernard began in astonishment. The young man sighed and shook his head. "A most unhappy gentleman."[1] And, pointing to the bloodstains in the centre of the square, "Do you see that damned spot?"[2] he asked in a voice that trembled with emotion.

1. cf. Silvia in Shakespeare, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, (5,4,31). Huxley uses at least 46 direct quotations from Shakespeare in the novel. For a handy chronological listing, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_quotes_from_Shakespeare_in_Brave_New_World
2. Macbeth, 5.1.30.

"A gramme is better than a damn," said Lenina mechanically from behind her hands. "I wish I had my *soma*!"

"*I* ought to have been there," the young man went on. "Why wouldn't they let me be the sacrifice? I'd have gone round ten times—twelve, fifteen. Palowhtiwa[3] only got as far as seven. They could have had twice as much blood from me. The multitudinous seas incarnadine."[4] He flung out his arms in a lavish gesture; then, despairingly, let them fall again. "But they wouldn't let me. They disliked me for my complexion.[5] It's always been like that. Always." Tears stood in the young man's eyes; he was ashamed and turned away.

Astonishment made Lenina forget the deprivation of *soma*. She uncovered her face and, for the first time, looked at the stranger. "Do you mean to say that you wanted to be hit with that whip?"

Still averted from her, the young man made a sign of affirmation. "For the sake of the pueblo—to make the rain come and the corn grow. And to please Pookong and Jesus. And then to show that I can bear pain without crying out. Yes," and his voice suddenly took on a new resonance, he turned with a proud squaring of the shoulders, a proud, defiant lifting of the chin "to show that I'm a man … Oh!" He gave a gasp and was silent, gaping. He had seen, for the first time in his life, the face of a girl whose cheeks were not the colour of chocolate or dogskin, whose hair was auburn and permanently waved, and whose expression (amazing novelty!) was one of benevolent interest. Lenina was smiling at him; such a nice-looking boy, she was thinking, and a really beautiful body. The blood rushed up into the young man's face; he dropped his eyes, raised them again for a moment only to find her still smiling at him, and was so much overcome that he had to turn away and pretend to be looking very hard at something on the other side of the square.

Bernard's questions made a diversion. Who? How? When? From where? Keeping his eyes fixed on Bernard's face (for so passionately did he long to see Lenina smiling that he simply dared not look at her), the young man tried to explain himself. Linda and he—Linda was his mother (the word made Lenina look uncomfortable)—were strangers in the Reservation. Linda had come from the Other Place long ago, before he was born, with a man who was his father. (Bernard pricked up his ears.) She had gone walking alone in those mountains over there to the North, had fallen down a steep place and hurt her head. ("Go on, go on," said Bernard excitedly.) Some hunters from Malpais had found her and brought her to the pueblo. As for the man who was his father, Linda had never seen him again. His name was Tomakin. (Yes, "Thomas" was the D.H.C.'s first name.) He must have flown away, back to the Other Place, away without her—a bad, unkind, unnatural man. "And so I was born in Malpais," he concluded. "In Malpais." And he shook his head.

The squalor of that little house on the outskirts of the pueblo! A space of dust and rubbish separated it from the village. Two famine-stricken dogs were nosing obscenely in the garbage at its door. Inside, when they entered, the twilight stank and was loud with flies. "Linda!" the young man called.

From the inner room a rather hoarse female voice said, "Coming." They waited. In bowls on the floor were the remains of a meal, perhaps of several meals.

The door opened. A very stout blonde squaw stepped across the threshold and stood looking at the strangers staring incredulously, her mouth open. Lenina noticed with disgust that two of the front teeth were missing. And the colour of the ones that remained … She shuddered. It was worse than the old man. So fat. And all the lines in her face, the flabbiness, the wrinkles. And the sagging cheeks, with those purplish blotches. And the red veins on her nose, the bloodshot eyes. And that neck—that neck;

3. A governor of *Zuñi*. The *Zuñi* area tribe of northern New Mexico near the Arizona border. Huxley derived many of the native names in his readings from the works of Frank Hamilton Cushing (1857-1900), an American anthropologist who lived with the *Zuñi* from 1879-1884.

4. Macbeth 2.2.60.

5. cf. "Mislike me not for my complexion," Merchant of Venice, 2.1.1.

and the blanket she wore over her head—ragged and filthy. And under the brown sack-shaped tunic those enormous breasts, the bulge of the stomach, the hips. Oh, much worse than the old man, much worse! And suddenly the creature burst out in a torrent of speech, rushed at her with outstretched arms and—Ford! Ford! it was too revolting, in another moment she'd be sick—pressed her against the bulge, the bosom, and began to kiss her. Ford! to *kiss*, slobberingly, and smelt too horrible, obviously never had a bath, and simply reeked of that beastly stuff that was put into Delta and Epsilon bottles (no, it wasn't true about Bernard), positively stank of alcohol. She broke away as quickly as she could.

A blubbered and distorted face confronted her; the creature was crying.

"Oh, my dear, my dear." The torrent of words flowed sobbingly. "If you knew how glad—after all these years! A civilized face. Yes, and civilized clothes. Because I thought I should never see a piece of real acetate silk again." She fingered the sleeve of Lenina's shirt. The nails were black. "And those adorable viscose velveteen shorts! Do you know, dear, I've still got my old clothes, the ones I came in, put away in a box. I'll show them you afterwards. Though, of course, the acetate has all gone into holes. But such a lovely white bandolier—though I must say your green morocco is even lovelier. Not that it did *me* much good, that bandolier." Her tears began to flow again. "I suppose John told you. What I had to suffer—and not a gramme of *soma* to be had. Only a drink of *mescal* every now and then, when Popé[6] used to bring it. Popé is a boy I used to know. But it makes you feel so bad afterwards, the *mescal* does, and you're sick with the *peyotl*; besides it always made that awful feeling of being ashamed much worse the next day. And I *was* so ashamed. Just think of it: me, a Beta—having a baby: put yourself in my place." (The mere suggestion made Lenina shudder.) "Though it wasn't my fault, I swear; because I still don't know how it happened, seeing that I did all the Malthusian Drill—you know, by numbers, One, two, three, four, always, I swear it; but all the same it happened, and of course there wasn't anything like an Abortion Centre here. Is it still down in Chelsea, by the way?" she asked. Lenina nodded. "And still floodlighted on Tuesdays and Fridays?" Lenina nodded again. "That lovely pink glass tower!" Poor Linda lifted her face and with closed eyes ecstatically contemplated the bright remembered image. "And the river at night," she whispered. Great tears oozed slowly out from behind her tight-shut eyelids. "And flying back in the evening from Stoke Poges. And then a hot bath and vibro-vacuum massage … But there." She drew a deep breath, shook her head, opened her eyes again, sniffed once or twice, then blew her nose on her fingers and wiped them on the skirt of her tunic. "Oh, I'm so sorry," she said in response to Lenina's involuntary grimace of disgust. "I oughtn't to have done that. I'm sorry. But what are you to do when there aren't any handkerchiefs? I remember how it used to upset me, all that dirt, and nothing being aseptic. I had an awful cut on my head when they first brought me here. You can't imagine what they used to put on it. Filth, just filth. 'Civilization is Sterilization,' I used to say to them. And 'Streptocock-Gee to Banbury-T, to see a fine bathroom and W.C.' as though they were children. But of course they didn't understand. How should they? And in the end I suppose I got used to it. And anyhow, how can you keep things clean when there isn't hot water laid on? And look at these clothes. This beastly wool isn't like acetate. It lasts and lasts. And you're supposed to mend it if it gets torn. But I'm a Beta; I worked in the Fertilizing Room; nobody ever taught me to do anything like that. It wasn't my business. Besides, it never used to be right to mend clothes. Throw them away when they've got holes in them and buy new. 'The more stitches, the less riches.' Isn't that right? Mending's anti-social. But it's all different here. It's like living with lunatics. Everything they do is mad." She looked round; saw John and Bernard had left them and were walking up and down in the dust and garbage outside the house; but, none the less confidentially lowering her voice, and leaning, while Lenina stiffened and shrank, so close that the blown reek of embryo-poison stirred the hair on her cheek. "For instance," she hoarsely whispered, "take the way they have one another here. Mad, I tell you, absolutely mad.

6. Popé was the native leader of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680.

Everybody belongs to every one else—don't they? don't they?" she insisted, tugging at Lenina's sleeve. Lenina nodded her averted head, let out the breath she had been holding and managed to draw another one, relatively untainted. "Well, here," the other went on, "nobody's supposed to belong to more than one person. And if you have people in the ordinary way, the others think you're wicked and anti-social. They hate and despise you. Once a lot of women came and made a scene because their men came to see me. Well, why not? And then they rushed at me … No, it was too awful. I can't tell you about it." Linda covered her face with her hands and shuddered. "They're so hateful, the women here. Mad, mad and cruel. And of course they don't know anything about Malthusian Drill, or bottles, or decanting, or anything of that sort. So they're having children all the time—like dogs. It's too revolting. And to think that I … Oh, Ford, Ford, Ford! And yet John was a great comfort to me. I don't know what I should have done without him. Even though he did get so upset whenever a man … Quite as a tiny boy, even. Once (but that was when he was bigger) he tried to kill poor Waihusiwa[7]—or was it Popé?—just because I used to have them sometimes. Because I never *could* make him understand that that was what civilized people ought to do. Being mad's infectious I believe. Anyhow, John seems to have caught it from the Indians. Because, of course, he was with them a lot. Even though they always were so beastly to him and wouldn't let him do all the things the other boys did. Which was a good thing in a way, because it made it easier for me to condition him a little. Though you've no idea how difficult that is. There's so much one doesn't know; it wasn't my business to know. I mean, when a child asks you how a helicopter works or who made the world—well, what are you to answer if you're a Beta and have always worked in the Fertilizing Room? What *are* you to answer?"

7. A *Zuñi*i tribe member and storyteller that Cushing knew.

198.

Brave New World: Chapter 8

Aldous Huxley

OUTSIDE, in the dust and among the garbage (there were four dogs now), Bernard and John were walking slowly up and down.

"So hard for me to realize," Bernard was saying, "to reconstruct. As though we were living on different planets, in different centuries. A mother, and all this dirt, and gods, and old age, and disease …" He shook his head. "It's almost inconceivable. I shall never understand, unless you explain."

"Explain what?"

"This." He indicated the pueblo. "That." And it was the little house outside the village. "Everything. All your life."

"But what is there to say?"

"From the beginning. As far back as you can remember."

"As far back as I can remember." John frowned. There was a long silence.

It was very hot. They had eaten a lot of tortillas and sweet corn. Linda said, "Come and lie down, Baby." They lay down together in the big bed. "Sing," and Linda sang. Sang "Streptocock-Gee to Banbury-T" and "Bye Baby Banting, soon you'll need decanting."[1] Her voice got fainter and fainter…

There was a loud noise, and he woke with a start. A man was saying something to Linda, and Linda was laughing. She had pulled the blanket up to her chin, but the man pulled it down again. His hair was like two black ropes, and round his arm was a lovely silver bracelet with blue stones in it. He liked the bracelet; but all the same, he was frightened; he hid his face against Linda's body. Linda put her hand on him and he felt safer. In those other words he did not understand so well, she said to the man, "Not with John here." The man looked at him, then again at Linda, and said a few words in a soft voice. Linda said, "No." But the man bent over the bed towards him and his face was huge, terrible; the black ropes of hair touched the blanket. "No," Linda said again, and he felt her hand squeezing him more tightly. "No, no!" But the man took hold of one of his arms, and it hurt. He screamed. The man put up his other hand and lifted him up. Linda was still holding him, still saying, "No, no." The man said something short and angry, and suddenly her hands were gone. "Linda, Linda." He kicked and wriggled; but the man carried him across to the door, opened it, put him down on the floor in the middle of the other room, and went away, shutting the door behind him. He got up, he ran to the door. Standing on tiptoe he could just reach the big wooden latch. He lifted it and pushed; but the door wouldn't open. "Linda," he shouted. She didn't answer.

He remembered a huge room, rather dark; and there were big wooden things with strings fastened to them, and lots of women standing round them—making blankets, Linda said. Linda told him to sit in the corner with the other children, while she went and helped the women. He played with the little boys for a long time. Suddenly people started talking very loud, and there were the women pushing Linda away,

1. Compare the nursery rhymes "Ride a cock-horse to Banbury Cross" and "Bye, baby bunting,/Daddy's gone a-hunting." Sir Frederick Banting (1891-1941), was a Canadian physiologist who received the Nobel Prize for Physiology/Medicine for his co-discovery of insulin.

and Linda was crying. She went to the door and he ran after her. He asked her why they were angry. “Because I broke something,” she said. And then she got angry too. “How should I know how to do their beastly weaving?” she said. “Beastly savages.” He asked her what savages were. When they got back to their house, Popé was waiting at the door, and he came in with them. He had a big gourd full of stuff that looked like water; only it wasn’t water, but something with a bad smell that burnt your mouth and made you cough. Linda drank some and Popé drank some, and then Linda laughed a lot and talked very loud; and then she and Popé went into the other room. When Popé went away, he went into the room. Linda was in bed and so fast asleep that he couldn’t wake her.

Popé used to come often. He said the stuff in the gourd was called *mescal*; but Linda said it ought to be called *soma*; only it made you feel ill afterwards. He hated Popé. He hated them all—all the men who came to see Linda. One afternoon, when he had been playing with the other children—it was cold, he remembered, and there was snow on the mountains—he came back to the house and heard angry voices in the bedroom. They were women’s voices, and they said words he didn’t understand, but he knew they were dreadful words. Then suddenly, crash! something was upset; he heard people moving about quickly, and there was another crash and then a noise like hitting a mule, only not so bony; then Linda screamed. “Oh, don’t, don’t, don’t!” she said. He ran in. There were three women in dark blankets. Linda was on the bed. One of the women was holding her wrists. Another was lying across her legs, so that she couldn’t kick. The third was hitting her with a whip. Once, twice, three times; and each time Linda screamed. Crying, he tugged at the fringe of the woman’s blanket. “Please, please.” With her free hand she held him away. The whip came down again, and again Linda screamed. He caught hold of the woman’s enormous brown hand between his own and bit it with all his might. She cried out, wrenched her hand free, and gave him such a push that he fell down. While he was lying on the ground she hit him three times with the whip. It hurt more than anything he had ever felt—like fire. The whip whistled again, fell. But this time it was Linda who screamed.

“But why did they want to hurt you, Linda?” he asked that night. He was crying, because the red marks of the whip on his back still hurt so terribly. But he was also crying because people were so beastly and unfair, and because he was only a little boy and couldn’t do anything against them. Linda was crying too. She was grown up, but she wasn’t big enough to fight against three of them. It wasn’t fair for her either. “Why did they want to hurt you, Linda?”

“I don’t know. How should I know?” It was difficult to hear what she said, because she was lying on her stomach and her face was in the pillow. “They say those men are *their* men,” she went on; and she did not seem to be talking to him at all; she seemed to be talking with some one inside herself. A long talk which she didn’t understand; and in the end she started crying louder than ever.

“Oh, don’t cry, Linda. Don’t cry.”

He pressed himself against her. He put his arm round her neck. Linda cried out. “Oh, be careful. My shoulder! Oh!” and she pushed him away, hard. His head banged against the wall. “Little idiot!” she shouted; and then, suddenly, she began to slap him. Slap, slap …

“Linda,” he cried out. “Oh, mother, don’t!”

“I’m not your mother. I won’t be your mother.”

“But, Linda … Oh!” She slapped him on the cheek.

“Turned into a savage,” she shouted. “Having young ones like an animal … If it hadn’t been for you, I might have gone to the Inspector, I might have got away. But not with a baby. That would have been too shameful.”

He saw that she was going to hit him again, and lifted his arm to guard his face. “Oh, don’t, Linda, please don’t.”

“Little beast!” She pulled down his arm; his face was uncovered.

“Don’t, Linda.” He shut his eyes, expecting the blow.

But she didn't hit him. After a little time, he opened his eyes again and saw that she was looking at him. He tried to smile at her. Suddenly she put her arms round him and kissed him again and again.

Sometimes, for several days, Linda didn't get up at all. She lay in bed and was sad. Or else she drank the stuff that Popé brought and laughed a great deal and went to sleep. Sometimes she was sick. Often she forgot to wash him, and there was nothing to eat except cold tortillas. He remembered the first time she found those little animals in his hair, how she screamed and screamed.

The happiest times were when she told him about the Other Place. "And you really can go flying, whenever you like?"

"Whenever you like." And she would tell him about the lovely music that came out of a box, and all the nice games you could play, and the delicious things to eat and drink, and the light that came when you pressed a little thing in the wall, and the pictures that you could hear and feel and smell, as well as see, and another box for making nice smells, and the pink and green and blue and silver houses as high as mountains, and everybody happy and no one ever sad or angry, and every one belonging to every one else, and the boxes where you could see and hear what was happening at the other side of the world, and babies in lovely clean bottles—everything so clean, and no nasty smells, no dirt at all—and people never lonely, but living together and being so jolly and happy, like the summer dances here in Malpais, but much happier, and the happiness being there every day, every day. … He listened by the hour. And sometimes, when he and the other children were tired with too much playing, one of the old men of the pueblo would talk to them, in those other words, of the great Transformer of the World, and of the long fight between Right Hand and Left Hand, between Wet and Dry; of Awonawilona, who made a great fog by thinking in the night, and then made the whole world out of the fog; of Earth Mother and Sky Father; of Ahaiyuta and Marsailema, the twins of War and Chance; of Jesus and Pookong; of Mary and Etsanatlehi, the woman who makes herself young again; of the Black Stone at Laguna and the Great Eagle and Our Lady of Acoma. Strange stories, all the more wonderful to him for being told in the other words and so not fully understood. Lying in bed, he would think of Heaven and London and Our Lady of Acoma and the rows and rows of babies in clean bottles and Jesus flying up and Linda flying up and the great Director of World Hatcheries and Awonawilona.

Lots of men came to see Linda. The boys began to point their fingers at him. In the strange other words they said that Linda was bad; they called her names he did not understand, but that he knew were bad names. One day they sang a song about her, again and again. He threw stones at them. They threw back; a sharp stone cut his cheek. The blood wouldn't stop; he was covered with blood.

Linda taught him to read. With a piece of charcoal she drew pictures on the wall—an animal sitting down, a baby inside a bottle; then she wrote letters. THE CAT IS ON THE MAT. THE TOT IS IN THE POT. He learned quickly and easily. When he knew how to read all the words she wrote on the wall, Linda opened her big wooden box and pulled out from under those funny little red trousers she never wore a thin little book. He had often seen it before. "When you're bigger," she had said, "you can read it." Well, now he was big enough. He was proud. "I'm afraid you won't find it very exciting," she said. "But it's the only thing I have." She sighed. "If only you could see the lovely reading machines we used to have in London!" He began reading. *The Chemical and Bacteriological Conditioning of the Embryo. Practical Instructions for Beta Embryo-Store Workers*. It took him a quarter of an hour to read the title alone. He threw the book on the floor. "Beastly, beastly book!" he said, and began to cry.

The boys still sang their horrible song about Linda. Sometimes, too, they laughed at him for being so ragged. When he tore his clothes, Linda did not know how to mend them. In the Other Place, she told him, people threw away clothes with holes in them and got new ones. "Rags, rags!" the boys used to shout at him. "But I can read," he said to himself, "and they can't. They don't even know what reading

is." It was fairly easy, if he thought hard enough about the reading, to pretend that he didn't mind when they made fun of him. He asked Linda to give him the book again.

The more the boys pointed and sang, the harder he read. Soon he could read all the words quite well. Even the longest. But what did they mean? He asked Linda; but even when she could answer it didn't seem to make it very clear, And generally she couldn't answer at all.

"What are chemicals?" he would ask.

"Oh, stuff like magnesium salts, and alcohol for keeping the Deltas and Epsilons small and backward, and calcium carbonate for bones, and all that sort of thing."

"But how do you make chemicals, Linda? Where do they come from?"

"Well, I don't know. You get them out of bottles. And when the bottles are empty, you send up to the Chemical Store for more. It's the Chemical Store people who make them, I suppose. Or else they send to the factory for them. I don't know. I never did any chemistry. My job was always with the embryos. It was the same with everything else he asked about. Linda never seemed to know. The old men of the pueblo had much more definite answers.

"The seed of men and all creatures, the seed of the sun and the seed of earth and the seed of the sky—Awonawilona made them all out of the Fog of Increase. Now the world has four wombs; and he laid the seeds in the lowest of the four wombs. And gradually the seeds began to grow …"

One day (John calculated later that it must have been soon after his twelfth birthday) he came home and found a book that he had never seen before lying on the floor in the bedroom. It was a thick book and looked very old. The binding had been eaten by mice; some of its pages were loose and crumpled. He picked it up, looked at the title-page: the book was called *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare.*

Linda was lying on the bed, sipping that horrible stinking *mescal* out of a cup. "Popé brought it," she said. Her voice was thick and hoarse like somebody else's voice. "It was lying in one of the chests of the Antelope Kiva. It's supposed to have been there for hundreds of years. I expect it's true, because I looked at it, and it seemed to be full of nonsense. Uncivilized. Still, it'll be good enough for you to practice your reading on." She took a last sip, set the cup down on the floor beside the bed, turned over on her side, hiccoughed once or twice and went to sleep.

He opened the book at random.

Nay, but to live
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,
Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love
Over the nasty sty…[2]

The strange words rolled through his mind; rumbled, like talking thunder; like the drums at the summer dances, if the drums could have spoken; like the men singing the Corn Song, beautiful, beautiful, so that you cried; like old Mitsima[3] saying magic over his feathers and his carved sticks and his bits of bone and stone—*kiathla tsilu silokwe silokwe silokwe. Kiai silu silu, tsithl*--but better than Mitsima's magic, because it meant more, because it talked to *him*, talked wonderfully and only half-understandably, a terrible beautiful magic, about Linda; about Linda lying there snoring, with the empty cup on the floor beside the bed; about Linda and Popé, Linda and Popé.

He hated Popé more and more. A man can smile and smile and be a villain. Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain.[4] What did the words exactly mean? He only half knew. But their magic was strong and went on rumbling in his head, and somehow it was as though he had never really hated Popé before; never really hated him because he had never been able to say how much he hated him. But now he had these words, these words like drums and singing and magic. These words and the strange, strange

2. Hamlet, 3.4.82 ff.
3. Here Huxley recalls Cushing's chapter, "The Hermit Mitsina" from *Zuñi Folk Tales*.
4. Hamlet 2.2. 558.

story out of which they were taken (he couldn't make head or tail of it, but it was wonderful, wonderful all the same)—they gave him a reason for hating Popé; and they made his hatred more real; they even made Popé himself more real.

One day, when he came in from playing, the door of the inner room was open, and he saw them lying together on the bed, asleep—white Linda and Popé almost black beside her, with one arm under her shoulders and the other dark hand on her breast, and one of the plaits of his long hair lying across her throat, like a black snake trying to strangle her. Popé's gourd and a cup were standing on the floor near the bed. Linda was snoring.

His heart seemed to have disappeared and left a hole. He was empty. Empty, and cold, and rather sick, and giddy. He leaned against the wall to steady himself. Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous … Like drums, like the men singing for the corn, like magic, the words repeated and repeated themselves in his head. From being cold he was suddenly hot. His cheeks burnt with the rush of blood, the room swam and darkened before his eyes. He ground his teeth. "I'll kill him, I'll kill him, I'll kill him," he kept saying. And suddenly there were more words.

When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage
Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed…[5]

The magic was on his side, the magic explained and gave orders. He stepped back in the outer room. "When he is drunk asleep …" The knife for the meat was lying on the floor near the fireplace. He picked it up and tiptoed to the door again. "When he is drunk asleep, drunk asleep …" He ran across the room and stabbed—oh, the blood!—stabbed again, as Popé heaved out of his sleep, lifted his hand to stab once more, but found his wrist caught, held and—oh, oh!—twisted. He couldn't move, he was trapped, and there were Popé's small black eyes, very close, staring into his own. He looked away. There were two cuts on Popé's left shoulder. "Oh, look at the blood!" Linda was crying. "Look at the blood!" She had never been able to bear the sight of blood. Popé lifted his other hand—to strike him, he thought. He stiffened to receive the blow. But the hand only took him under the chin and turned his face, so that he had to look again into Popé's eyes. For a long time, for hours and hours. And suddenly—he couldn't help it—he began to cry. Popé burst out laughing. "Go," he said, in the other Indian words. "Go, my brave Ahaiyuta." He ran out into the other room to hide his tears.

"You are fifteen," said old Mitsima, in the Indian words. "Now I may teach you to work the clay." Squatting by the river, they worked together.

"First of all," said Mitsima, taking a lump of the wetted clay between his hands, "we make a little moon." The old man squeezed the lump into a disk, then bent up the edges, the moon became a shallow cup.

Slowly and unskilfully he imitated the old man's delicate gestures.

"A moon, a cup, and now a snake." Mitsima rolled out another piece of clay into a long flexible cylinder, trooped it into a circle and pressed it on to the rim of the cup. "Then another snake. And another. And another." Round by round, Mitsima built up the sides of the pot; it was narrow, it bulged, it narrowed again towards the neck. Mitsima squeezed and patted, stroked and scraped; and there at last it stood, in shape the familiar water pot of Malpais, but creamy white instead of black, and still soft to the touch. The crooked parody of Mitsima's, his own stood beside it. Looking at the two pots, he had to laugh.

"But the next one will be better," he said, and began to moisten another piece of clay.

To fashion, to give form, to feel his fingers gaining in skill and power—this gave him an extraordinary pleasure. "A, B, C, Vitamin D," he sang to himself as he worked. "The fat's in the liver, the cod's in the

5. Hamlet 3.3. 89ff.

sea." And Mitsima also sang—a song about killing a bear. They worked all day, and all day he was filled with an intense, absorbing happiness.

"Next winter," said old Mitsima, "I will teach you to make the bow."

He stood for a long time outside the house, and at last the ceremonies within were finished. The door opened; they came out. Kothlu came first, his right hand out-stretched and tightly closed, as though over some precious jewel. Her clenched hand similarly outstretched, Kiakimé[6] followed. They walked in silence, and in silence, behind them, came the brothers and sisters and cousins and all the troop of old people.

They walked out of the pueblo, across the mesa. At the edge of the cliff they halted, facing the early morning sun. Kothlu opened his hand. A pinch of corn meal lay white on the palm; he breathed on it, murmured a few words, then threw it, a handful of white dust, towards the sun. Kiakimé did the same. Then Kiakime's father stepped forward, and holding up a feathered prayer stick, made a long prayer, then threw the stick after the corn meal.

"It is finished," said old Mitsima in a loud voice. "They are married."

"Well," said Linda, as they turned away, "all I can say is, it does seem a lot of fuss to make about so little. In civilized countries, when a boy wants to have a girl, he just … But where *are* you going, John?"

He paid no attention to her calling, but ran on, away, away, anywhere to be by himself.

It is finished Old Mitsima's words repeated themselves in his mind. Finished, finished … In silence and from a long way off, but violently, desperately, hopelessly, he had loved Kiakimé. And now it was finished. He was sixteen.

At the full moon, in the Antelope Kiva, secrets would be told, secrets would be done and borne. They would go down, boys, into the kiva and come out again, men. The boys were all afraid and at the same time impatient. And at last it was the day. The sun went down, the moon rose. He went with the others. Men were standing, dark, at the entrance to the kiva; the ladder went down into the red lighted depths. Already the leading boys had begun to climb down. Suddenly, one of the men stepped forward, caught him by the arm, and pulled him out of the ranks. He broke free and dodged back into his place among the others. This time the man struck him, pulled his hair. "Not for you, white-hair!" "Not for the son of the she-dog," said one of the other men. The boys laughed. "Go!" And as he still hovered on the fringes of the group, "Go!" the men shouted again. One of them bent down, took a stone, threw it. "Go, go, go!" There was a shower of stones. Bleeding, he ran away into the darkness. From the red-lit kiva came the noise of singing. The last of the boys had climbed down the ladder. He was all alone.

All alone, outside the pueblo, on the bare plain of the mesa. The rock was like bleached bones in the moonlight. Down in the valley, the coyotes were howling at the moon. The bruises hurt him, the cuts were still bleeding; but it was not for pain that he sobbed; it was because he was all alone, because he had been driven out, alone, into this skeleton world of rocks and moonlight. At the edge of the precipice he sat down. The moon was behind him; he looked down into the black shadow of the mesa, into the black shadow of death. He had only to take one step, one little jump. … He held out his right hand in the moonlight. From the cut on his wrist the blood was still oozing. Every few seconds a drop fell, dark, almost colourless in the dead light. Drop, drop, drop. To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow … He had discovered Time and Death and God.

"Alone, always alone," the young man was saying.

6. Cushing refers to the city of Kiakimé in his "Outlines of *Zuñi* Creation Myths."

The words awoke a plaintive echo in Bernard's mind. Alone, alone … "So am I," he said, on a gush of confidingness. "Terribly alone."

"Are you?" John looked surprised. "I thought that in the Other Place … I mean, Linda always said that nobody was ever alone there."

Bernard blushed uncomfortably. "You see," he said, mumbling and with averted eyes, "I'm rather different from most people, I suppose. If one happens to be decanted different …"

"Yes, that's just it." The young man nodded. "If one's different, one's bound to be lonely. They're beastly to one. Do you know, they shut me out of absolutely everything? When the other boys were sent out to spend the night on the mountains—you know, when you have to dream which your sacred animal is—they wouldn't let me go with the others; they wouldn't tell me any of the secrets. I did it by myself, though," he added. "Didn't eat anything for five days and then went out one night alone into those mountains there." He pointed.

Patronizingly, Bernard smiled. "And did you dream of anything?" he asked.

The other nodded. "But I mustn't tell you what." He was silent for a little; then, in a low voice, "Once," he went on, "I did something that none of the others did: I stood against a rock in the middle of the day, in summer, with my arms out, like Jesus on the Cross."

"What on earth for?"

"I wanted to know what it was like being crucified. Hanging there in the sun …"

"But why?"

"Why? Well …" He hesitated. "Because I felt I ought to. If Jesus could stand it. And then, if one has done something wrong … Besides, I was unhappy; that was another reason."

"It seems a funny way of curing your unhappiness," said Bernard. But on second thoughts he decided that there was, after all, some sense in it. Better than taking *soma* …

"I fainted after a time," said the young man. "Fell down on my face. Do you see the mark where I cut myself?" He lifted the thick yellow hair from his forehead. The scar showed, pale and puckered, on his right temple.

Bernard looked, and then quickly, with a little shudder, averted his eyes. His conditioning had made him not so much pitiful as profoundly squeamish. The mere suggestion of illness or wounds was to him not only horrifying, but even repulsive and rather disgusting. Like dirt, or deformity, or old age. Hastily he changed the subject.

"I wonder if you'd like to come back to London with us?" he asked, making the first move in a campaign whose strategy he had been secretly elaborating ever since, in the little house, he had realized who the "father" of this young savage must be. "Would you like that?"

The young man's face lit up. "Do you really mean it?"

"Of course; if I can get permission, that is."

"Linda too?"

"Well …" He hesitated doubtfully. That revolting creature! No, it was impossible. Unless, unless … It suddenly occurred to Bernard that her very revoltingness might prove an enormous asset. "But of course!" he cried, making up for his first hesitations with an excess of noisy cordiality.

The young man drew a deep breath. "To think it should be coming true—what I've dreamt of all my life. Do you remember what Miranda says?"

"Who's Miranda?"

But the young man had evidently not heard the question. "O wonder!" he was saying; and his eyes shone, his face was brightly flushed. "How many goodly creatures are there here! How beauteous mankind is!"[7] The flush suddenly deepened; he was thinking of Lenina, of an angel in bottle-green

7. The Tempest 5.1.184 ff.

viscose, lustrous with youth and skin food, plump, benevolently smiling. His voice faltered. “O brave new world,” he began, then-suddenly interrupted himself; the blood had left his cheeks; he was as pale as paper. “Are you married to her?” he asked.

“Am I what?”

“Married. You know—for ever. They say ‘for ever’ in the Indian words; it can’t be broken.”

“Ford, no!” Bernard couldn’t help laughing.

John also laughed, but for another reason—laughed for pure joy.

“O brave new world,” he repeated. “O brave new world that has such people in it. Let’s start at once.”

“You have a most peculiar way of talking sometimes,” said Bernard, staring at the young man in perplexed astonishment. “And, anyhow, hadn’t you better wait till you actually see the new world?”

199.

Brave New World: Chapter 9

Aldous Huxley

LENINA felt herself entitled, after this day of queerness and horror, to a complete and absolute holiday. As soon as they got back to the rest-house, she swallowed six half-gramme tablets of *soma*, lay down on her bed, and within ten minutes had embarked for lunar eternity. It would be eighteen hours at the least before she was in time again.

Bernard meanwhile lay pensive and wide-eyed in the dark. It was long after midnight before he fell asleep. Long after midnight; but his insomnia had not been fruitless; he had a plan.

Punctually, on the following morning, at ten o'clock, the green-uniformed octoroon stepped out of his helicopter. Bernard was waiting for him among the agaves.

"Miss Crowne's gone on *soma*-holiday," he explained. "Can hardly be back before five. Which leaves us seven hours."

He could fly to Santa Fé, do all the business he had to do, and be in Malpais again long before she woke up.

"She'll be quite safe here by herself?"

"Safe as helicopters," the octoroon assured him.

They climbed into the machine and started off at once. At ten thirty-four they landed on the roof of the Santa Fé Post Office; at ten thirty-seven Bernard had got through to the World Controller's Office in Whitehall; at ten thirty-seven he was speaking to his fordship's fourth personal secretary; at ten forty-four he was repeating his story to the first secretary, and at ten forty-seven and a half it was the deep, resonant voice of Mustapha Mond himself that sounded in his ears.

"I ventured to think," stammered Bernard, "that your fordship might find the matter of sufficient scientific interest …"

"Yes, I do find it of sufficient scientific interest," said the deep voice. "Bring these two individuals back to London with you."

"Your fordship is aware that I shall need a special permit …"

"The necessary orders," said Mustapha Mond, "are being sent to the Warden of the Reservation at this moment. You will proceed at once to the Warden's Office. Good-morning, Mr. Marx."

There was silence. Bernard hung up the receiver and hurried up to the roof.

"Warden's Office," he said to the Gamma-green octoroon. At ten fifty-four Bernard was shaking hands with the Warden.

"Delighted, Mr. Marx, delighted." His boom was deferential. "We have just received special orders …"

"I know," said Bernard, interrupting him. "I was talking to his fordship on the phone a moment ago." His bored tone implied that he was in the habit of talking to his fordship every day of the week. He dropped into a chair. "If you'll kindly take all the necessary steps as soon as possible. As soon as possible," he emphatically repeated. He was thoroughly enjoying himself.

At eleven three he had all the necessary papers in his pocket. "So long," he said patronizingly to the Warden, who had accompanied him as far as the lift gates. "So long."

He walked across to the hotel, had a bath, a vibro-vac massage, and an electrolytic shave, listened in to the morning's news, looked in for half an hour on the televisor, ate a leisured luncheon, and at half-past two flew back with the octoroon to Malpais.

The young man stood outside the rest-house. "Bernard," he called. "Bernard!" There was no answer.

Noiseless on his deerksin moccasins, he ran up the steps and tried the door. The door was locked.

They were gone! Gone! It was the most terrible thing that had ever happened to him. She had asked him to come and see them, and now they were gone. He sat down on the steps and cried.

Half an hour later it occurred to him to look through the window. The first thing he saw was a green suit-case, with the initials L.C. painted on the lid. Joy flared up like fire within him. He picked up a stone. The smashed glass tinkled on the floor. A moment later he was inside the room. He opened the green suit-case; and all at once he was breathing Lenina's perfume, filling his lungs with her essential being. His heart beat wildly; for a moment he was almost faint. Then, bending over the precious box, he touched, he lifted into the light, he examined. The zippers on Lenina's spare pair of viscose velveteen shorts were at first a puzzle, then solved, a delight. Zip, and then zip; zip, and then zip; he was enchanted. Her green slippers were the most beautiful things he had ever seen. He unfolded a pair of zippicamiknicks, blushed, put them hastily away again; but kissed a perfumed acetate handkerchief and wound a scarf round his neck. Opening a box, he spilt a cloud of scented powder. His hands were floury with the stuff. He wiped them on his chest, on his shoulders, on his bare arms. Delicious perfume! He shut his eyes; he rubbed his cheek against his own powdered arm. Touch of smooth skin against his face, scent in his nostrils of musky dust—her real presence. "Lenina," he whispered. "Lenina!"

A noise made him start, made him guiltily turn. He crammed up his thieveries into the suit-case and shut the lid; then listened again, looked. Not a sign of life, not a sound. And yet he had certainly heard something—something like a sigh, something like the creak of a board. He tiptoed to the door and, cautiously opening it, found himself looking on to a broad landing. On the opposite side of the landing was another door, ajar. He stepped out, pushed, peeped.

There, on a low bed, the sheet flung back, dressed in a pair of pink one-piece zippyjamas, lay Lenina, fast asleep and so beautiful in the midst of her curls, so touchingly childish with her pink toes and her grave sleeping face, so trustful in the helplessness of her limp hands and melted limbs, that the tears came to his eyes.

With an infinity of quite unnecessary precautions—for nothing short of a pistol shot could have called Lenina back from her *soma*-holiday before the appointed time—he entered the room, he knelt on the floor beside the bed. He gazed, he clasped his hands, his lips moved. "Her eyes," he murmured.

"Her eyes, her hair, her cheek, her gait, her voice;
Handlest in thy discourse O! that her hand,
In whose comparison all whites are ink
Writing their own reproach; to whose soft seizure
The cygnet's down is harsh …"

A fly buzzed round her; he waved it away. "Flies," he remembered,

"On the white wonder of dear Juliet's hand, may seize
And steal immortal blessing from her lips,
Who, even in pure and vestal modesty,
Still blush, as thinking their own kisses sin."[1]

Very slowly, with the hesitating gesture of one who reaches forward to stroke a shy and possibly rather dangerous bird, he put out his hand. It hung there trembling, within an inch of those limp fingers, on the

1. Troilus and Cressida 1.1.51 ff.

verge of contact. Did he dare? Dare to profane with his unworthiest hand that … No, he didn't. The bird was too dangerous. His hand dropped back. How beautiful she was! How beautiful!

Then suddenly he found himself reflecting that he had only to take hold of the zipper at her neck and give one long, strong pull … He shut his eyes, he shook his head with the gesture of a dog shaking its ears as it emerges from the water. Detestable thought! He was ashamed of himself. Pure and vestal modesty…[2]

There was a humming in the air. Another fly trying to steal immortal blessings? A wasp? He looked, saw nothing. The humming grew louder and louder, localized itself as being outside the shuttered windows. The plane! In a panic, he scrambled to his feet and ran into the other room, vaulted through the open window, and hurrying along the path between the tall agaves was in time to receive Bernard Marx as he climbed out of the helicopter.

2. Romeo and Juliet 3.3.38.

200.

Brave New World: Chapter 10

Aldous Huxley

THE HANDS of all the four thousand electric clocks in all the Bloomsbury Centre's four thousand rooms marked twenty-seven minutes past two. "This hive of industry," as the Director was fond of calling it, was in the full buzz of work. Every one was busy, everything in ordered motion. Under the microscopes, their long tails furiously lashing, spermatozoa were burrowing head first into eggs; and, fertilized, the eggs were expanding, dividing, or if bokanovskified, budding and breaking up into whole populations of separate embryos. From the Social Predestination Room the escalators went rumbling down into the basement, and there, in the crimson darkness, stewingly warm on their cushion of peritoneum and gorged with blood-surrogate and hormones, the foetuses grew and grew or, poisoned, languished into a stunted Epsilonhood. With a faint hum and rattle the moving racks crawled imperceptibly through the weeks and the recapitulated aeons to where, in the Decanting Room, the newly-unbottled babes uttered their first yell of horror and amazement.

The dynamos purred in the sub-basement, the lifts rushed up and down. On all the eleven floors of Nurseries it was feeding time. From eighteen hundred bottles eighteen hundred carefully labelled infants were simultaneously sucking down their pint of pasteurized external secretion.

Above them, in ten successive layers of dormitory, the little boys and girls who were still young enough to need an afternoon sleep were as busy as every one else, though they did not know it, listening unconsciously to hypnopaedic lessons in hygiene and sociability, in class-consciousness and the toddler's love-life. Above these again were the playrooms where, the weather having turned to rain, nine hundred older children were amusing themselves with bricks and clay modelling, hunt-the-zipper, and erotic play.

Buzz, buzz! the hive was humming, busily, joyfully. Blithe was the singing of the young girls over their test-tubes, the Predestinators whistled as they worked, and in the Decanting Room what glorious jokes were cracked above the empty bottles! But the Director's face, as he entered the Fertilizing Room with Henry Foster, was grave, wooden with severity.

"A public example," he was saying. "In this room, because it contains more high-caste workers than any other in the Centre. I have told him to meet me here at half-past two."

"He does his work very well," put in Henry, with hypocritical generosity.

"I know. But that's all the more reason for severity. His intellectual eminence carries with it corresponding moral responsibilities. The greater a man's talents, the greater his power to lead astray. It is better that one should suffer than that many should be corrupted. Consider the matter dispassionately, Mr. Foster, and you will see that no offence is so heinous as unorthodoxy of behaviour. Murder kills only the individual—and, after all, what is an individual?" With a sweeping gesture he indicated the rows of microscopes, the test-tubes, the incubators. "We can make a new one with the greatest ease—as many as we like. Unorthodoxy threatens more than the life of a mere individual; it strikes at Society itself. Yes, at Society itself," he repeated. "Ah, but here he comes."

Bernard had entered the room and was advancing between the rows of fertilizers towards them. A veneer of jaunty self-confidence thinly concealed his nervousness. The voice in which he said, "Good-

morning, Director," was absurdly too loud; that in which, correcting his mistake, he said, "You asked me to come and speak to you here," ridiculously soft, a squeak.

"Yes, Mr. Marx," said the Director portentously. "I did ask you to come to me here. You returned from your holiday last night, I understand."

"Yes," Bernard answered.

"Yes-s," repeated the Director, lingering, a serpent, on the "s." Then, suddenly raising his voice, "Ladies and gentlemen," he trumpeted, "ladies and gentlemen."

The singing of the girls over their test-tubes, the preoccupied whistling of the Microscopists, suddenly ceased. There was a profound silence; every one looked round.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the Director repeated once more, "excuse me for thus interrupting your labours. A painful duty constrains me. The security and stability of Society are in danger. Yes, in danger, ladies and gentlemen. This man," he pointed accusingly at Bernard, "this man who stands before you here, this Alpha-Plus to whom so much has been given, and from whom, in consequence, so much must be expected, this colleague of yours—or should I anticipate and say this ex-colleague?—has grossly betrayed the trust imposed in him. By his heretical views on sport and *soma*, by the scandalous unorthodoxy of his sex-life, by his refusal to obey the teachings of Our Ford and behave out of office hours, 'even as a little infant,'" (here the Director made the sign of the T), "he has proved himself an enemy of Society, a subverter, ladies and gentlemen, of all Order and Stability, a conspirator against Civilization itself. For this reason I propose to dismiss him, to dismiss him with ignominy from the post he has held in this Centre; I propose forthwith to apply for his transference to a Sub-Centre of the lowest order and, that his punishment may serve the best interest of Society, as far as possible removed from any important Centre of population. In Iceland he will have small opportunity to lead others astray by his unfordly example." The Director paused; then, folding his arms, he turned impressively to Bernard. "Marx," he said, "can you show any reason why I should not now execute the judgment passed upon you?"

"Yes, I can," Bernard answered in a very loud voice.

Somewhat taken aback, but still majestically, "Then show it," said the Director.

"Certainly. But it's in the passage. One moment." Bernard hurried to the door and threw it open. "Come in," he commanded, and the reason came in and showed itself.

There was a gasp, a murmur of astonishment and horror; a young girl screamed; standing on a chair to get a better view some one upset two test-tubes full of spermatozoa. Bloated, sagging, and among those firm youthful bodies, those undistorted faces, a strange and terrifying monster of middle-agedness, Linda advanced into the room, coquettishly smiling her broken and discoloured smile, and rolling as she walked, with what was meant to be a voluptuous undulation, her enormous haunches. Bernard walked beside her.

"There he is," he said, pointing at the Director.

"Did you think I didn't recognize him?" Linda asked indignantly; then, turning to the Director, "Of course I knew you; Tomakin, I should have known you anywhere, among a thousand. But perhaps you've forgotten me. Don't you remember? Don't you remember, Tomakin? Your Linda." She stood looking at him, her head on one side, still smiling, but with a smile that became progressively, in face of the Director's expression of petrified disgust, less and less self-confident, that wavered and finally went out. "Don't you remember, Tomakin?" she repeated in a voice that trembled. Her eyes were anxious, agonized. The blotched and sagging face twisted grotesquely into the grimace of extreme grief. "Tomakin!" She held out her arms. Some one began to titter.

"What's the meaning," began the Director, "of this monstrous …"

"Tomakin!" She ran forward, her blanket trailing behind her, threw her arms round his neck, hid her face on his chest.

A howl of laughter went up irrepressibly.

"… this monstrous practical joke," the Director shouted.

Red in the face, he tried to disengage himself from her embrace. Desperately she clung. "But I'm Linda, I'm Linda.'" The laughter drowned her voice. "You made me have a baby," she screamed above the uproar. There was a sudden and appalling hush; eyes floated uncomfortably, not knowing where to look. The Director went suddenly pale, stopped struggling and stood, his hands on her wrists, staring down at her, horrified. "Yes, a baby—and I was its mother." She flung the obscenity like a challenge into the outraged silence; then, suddenly breaking away from him, ashamed, ashamed, covered her face with her hands, sobbing. "It wasn't my fault, Tomakin. Because I always did my drill, didn't I? Didn't I? Always … I don't know how … If you knew how awful, Tomakin … But he was a comfort to me, all the same." Turning towards the door, "John!" she called. "John!"

He came in at once, paused for a moment just inside the door, looked round, then soft on his moccasined feet strode quickly across the room, fell on his knees in front of the Director, and said in a clear voice: "My father!"

The word (for "father" was not so much obscene as—with its connotation of something at one remove from the loathsomeness and moral obliquity of child-bearing—merely gross, a scatological rather than a pornographic impropriety); the comically smutty word relieved what had become a quite intolerable tension. Laughter broke out, enormous, almost hysterical, peal after peal, as though it would never stop. My father—and it was the Director! My *father*! Oh Ford, oh Ford! That was really too good. The whooping and the roaring renewed themselves, faces seemed on the point of disintegration, tears were streaming. Six more test-tubes of spermatozoa were upset. My *father*!

Pale, wild-eyed, the Director glared about him in an agony of bewildered humiliation.

My *father*! The laughter, which had shown signs of dying away, broke out again more loudly than ever. He put his hands over his ears and rushed out of the room.

201.

Brave New World: Chapter 11

Aldous Huxley

AFTER the scene in the Fertilizing Room, all upper-caste London was wild to see this delicious creature who had fallen on his knees before the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning—or rather the ex-Director, for the poor man had resigned immediately afterwards and never set foot inside the Centre again—had flopped down and called him (the joke was almost too good to be true!) "my father." Linda, on the contrary, cut no ice; nobody had the smallest desire to see Linda. To say one was a mother—that was past a joke: it was an obscenity. Moreover, she wasn't a real savage, had been hatched out of a bottle and conditioned like any one else: so couldn't have really quaint ideas. Finally—and this was by far the strongest reason for people's not wanting to see poor Linda—there was her appearance. Fat; having lost her youth; with bad teeth, and a blotched complexion, and that figure (Ford!)—you simply couldn't look at her without feeling sick, yes, positively sick. So the best people were quite determined *not* to see Linda. And Linda, for her part, had no desire to see them. The return to civilization was for her the return to *soma*, was the possibility of lying in bed and taking holiday after holiday, without ever having to come back to a headache or a fit of vomiting, without ever being made to feel as you always felt after *peyotl*, as though you'd done something so shamefully anti-social that you could never hold up your head again. Soma played none of these unpleasant tricks. The holiday it gave was perfect and, if the morning after was disagreeable, it was so, not intrinsically, but only by comparison with the joys of the holiday. The remedy was to make the holiday continuous. Greedily she clamoured for ever larger, ever more frequent doses. Dr. Shaw at first demurred; then let her have what she wanted. She took as much as twenty grammes a day.

"Which will finish her off in a month or two," the doctor confided to Bernard. "One day the respiratory centre will be paralyzed. No more breathing. Finished. And a good thing too. If we could rejuvenate, of course it would be different. But we can't."

Surprisingly, as every one thought (for on *soma*-holiday Linda was most conveniently out of the way), John raised objections.

"But aren't you shortening her life by giving her so much?"

"In one sense, yes," Dr. Shaw admitted. "But in another we're actually lengthening it." The young man stared, uncomprehending. "*Soma* may make you lose a few years in time," the doctor went on. "But think of the enormous, immeasurable durations it can give you out of time. Every *soma*-holiday is a bit of what our ancestors used to call eternity."

John began to understand. "Eternity was in our lips and eyes,"[1] he murmured.

"Eh?"

"Nothing."

"Of course," Dr. Shaw went on, "you can't allow people to go popping off into eternity if they've got any serious work to do. But as she hasn't got any serious work …"

"All the same," John persisted, "I don't believe it's right."

1. Antony and Cleopatra 1.3.35.

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. “Well, of course, if you prefer to have her screaming mad all the time …”

In the end John was forced to give in. Linda got her *soma*. Thenceforward she remained in her little room on the thirty-seventh floor of Bernard’s apartment house, in bed, with the radio and television always on, and the patchouli tap just dripping, and the *soma* tablets within reach of her hand—there she remained; and yet wasn’t there at all, was all the time away, infinitely far away, on holiday; on holiday in some other world, where the music of the radio was a labyrinth of sonorous colours, a sliding, palpitating labyrinth, that led (by what beautifully inevitable windings) to a bright centre of absolute conviction; where the dancing images of the television box were the performers in some indescribably delicious all-singing feely; where the dripping patchouli was more than scent—was the sun, was a million saxophones, was Popé making love, only much more so, incomparably more, and without end.

“No, we can’t rejuvenate. But I’m very glad,” Dr. Shaw had concluded, “to have had this opportunity to see an example of senility in a human being. Thank you so much for calling me in.” He shook Bernard warmly by the hand.

It was John, then, they were all after. And as it was only through Bernard, his accredited guardian, that John could be seen, Bernard now found himself, for the first time in his life, treated not merely normally, but as a person of outstanding importance. There was no more talk of the alcohol in his blood-surrogate, no gibes at his personal appearance. Henry Foster went out of his way to be friendly; Benito Hoover made him a present of six packets of sex-hormone chewing-gum; the Assistant Predestinator came out and cadged almost abjectly for an invitation to one of Bernard’s evening parties. As for the women, Bernard had only to hint at the possibility of an invitation, and he could have whichever of them he liked.

“Bernard’s asked me to meet the Savage next Wednesday,” Fanny announced triumphantly.

“I’m so glad,” said Lenina. “And now you must admit that you were wrong about Bernard. Don’t you think he’s really rather sweet?”

Fanny nodded. “And I must say,” she said, “I was quite agreeably surprised.”

The Chief Bottler, the Director of Predestination, three Deputy Assistant Fertilizer-Generals, the Professor of Feelies in the College of Emotional Engineering, the Dean of the Westminster Community Singery, the Supervisor of Bokanovskification—the list of Bernard’s notabilities was interminable.

“And I had six girls last week,” he confided to Helmholtz Watson. “One on Monday, two on Tuesday, two more on Friday, and one on Saturday. And if I’d had the time or the inclination, there were at least a dozen more who were only too anxious …”

Helmholtz listened to his boastings in a silence so gloomily disapproving that Bernard was offended.

“You’re envious,” he said.

Helmholtz shook his head. “I’m rather sad, that’s all,” he answered.

Bernard went off in a huff. Never, he told himself, never would he speak to Helmholtz again.

The days passed. Success went fizzily to Bernard’s head, and in the process completely reconciled him (as any good intoxicant should do) to a world which, up till then, he had found very unsatisfactory. In so far as it recognized him as important, the order of things was good. But, reconciled by his success, he yet refused to forego the privilege of criticizing this order. For the act of criticizing heightened his sense of importance, made him feel larger. Moreover, he did genuinely believe that there were things to criticize. (At the same time, he genuinely liked being a success and having all the girls he wanted.) Before those who now, for the sake of the Savage, paid their court to him, Bernard would parade a carping unorthodoxy. He was politely listened to. But behind his back people shook their heads. “That young man will come to a bad end,” they said, prophesying the more confidently in that they themselves would in due course personally see to it that the end was bad. “He won’t find another Savage to help him out a second time,” they said. Meanwhile, however, there was the first Savage; they were polite.

And because they were polite, Bernard felt positively gigantic—gigantic and at the same time light with elation, lighter than air.

"Lighter than air," said Bernard, pointing upwards.

Like a pearl in the sky, high, high above them, the Weather Department's captive balloon shone rosily in the sunshine.

"… the said Savage," so ran Bernard's instructions, "to be shown civilized life in all its aspects. …"

He was being shown a bird's-eye view of it at present, a bird's-eye view from the platform of the Charing-T Tower. The Station Master and the Resident Meteorologist were acting as guides. But it was Bernard who did most of the talking. Intoxicated, he was behaving as though, at the very least, he were a visiting World Controller. Lighter than air.

The Bombay Green Rocket dropped out of the sky. The passengers alighted. Eight identical Dravidian twins in khaki looked out of the eight portholes of the cabin—the stewards.

"Twelve hundred and fifty kilometres an hour," said the Station Master impressively. "What do you think of that, Mr. Savage?"

John thought it very nice. "Still," he said, "Ariel could put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes."[2]

"The Savage," wrote Bernard in his report to Mustapha Mond, "shows surprisingly little astonishment at, or awe of, civilized inventions. This is partly due, no doubt, to the fact that he has heard them talked about by the woman Linda, his m—."

(Mustapha Mond frowned. "Does the fool think I'm too squeamish to see the word written out at full length?")

"Partly on his interest being focussed on what he calls 'the soul,' which he persists in regarding as an entity independent of the physical environment, whereas, as I tried to point out to him …"

The Controller skipped the next sentences and was just about to turn the page in search of something more interestingly concrete, when his eye was caught by a series of quite extraordinary phrases. " … though I must admit," he read, "that I agree with the Savage in finding civilized infantility too easy or, as he puts it, not expensive enough; and I would like to take this opportunity of drawing your fordship's attention to …"

Mustapha Mond's anger gave place almost at once to mirth. The idea of this creature solemnly lecturing him—*him*—about the social order was really too grotesque. The man must have gone mad. "I ought to give him a lesson," he said to himself; then threw back his head and laughed aloud. For the moment, at any rate, the lesson would not be given.

It was a small factory of lighting-sets for helicopters, a branch of the Electrical Equipment Corporation.[3] They were met on the roof itself (for that circular letter of recommendation from the Controller was magical in its effects) by the Chief Technician and the Human Element Manager. They walked downstairs into the factory.

"Each process," explained the Human Element Manager, "is carried out, so far as possible, by a single Bokanovsky Group."

And, in effect, eighty-three almost noseless black brachycephalic Deltas were cold-pressing. The fifty-six four-spindle chucking and turning machines were being manipulated by fifty-six aquiline and ginger Gammas. One hundred and seven heat-conditioned Epsilon Senegalese were working in the foundry. Thirty-three Delta females, long-headed, sandy, with narrow pelvises, and all within 20 millimetres of 1 metre 69 centimetres tall, were cutting screws. In the assembling room, the dynamos were being

2. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Puck (not Ariel), boasts, "I'll put a girdle round about the earth/In forty minutes" (MND 2.1.175-176).

3. Here Huxley recalls his journalistic foray to the Midlands and to the north of England as a paid correspondent of William Randolph Hearst. Huxley's "Sight-seeing in Alien Englands" [June 1931] begins: "In Birmingham, I visited a factory of electrical equipment for motor cars. A very efficient, up-to-date factory. In the room where the magnetos were assembled, forty or fifty girls were sitting at a long table" (Baker, Robert and James Sexton. Aldous Huxley Complete Essays vol. 3, 280).

put together by two sets of Gamma-Plus dwarfs. The two low work-tables faced one another; between them crawled the conveyor with its load of separate parts; forty-seven blonde heads were confronted by forty-seven brown ones. Forty-seven snubs by forty-seven hooks; forty-seven receding by forty-seven prognathous chins. The completed mechanisms were inspected by eighteen identical curly auburn girls in Gamma green, packed in crates by thirty-four short-legged, left-handed male Delta-Minuses, and loaded into the waiting trucks and lorries by sixty-three blue-eyed, flaxen and freckled Epsilon Semi-Morons.

"O brave new world …" By some malice of his memory the Savage found himself repeating Miranda's words. "O brave new world that has such people in it."

"And I assure you," the Human Element Manager concluded, as they left the factory, "we hardly ever have any trouble with our workers. We always find …"

But the Savage had suddenly broken away from his companions and was violently retching, behind a clump of laurels, as though the solid earth had been a helicopter in an air pocket.

"The Savage," wrote Bernard, "refuses to take *soma*, and seems much distressed because of the woman Linda, his m— , remains permanently on holiday. It is worthy of note that, in spite of his m—'s senility and the extreme repulsiveness of her appearance, the Savage frequently goes to see her and appears to be much attached to her—an interesting example of the way in which early conditioning can be made to modify and even run counter to natural impulses (in this case, the impulse to recoil from an unpleasant object)."

At Eton[4] they alighted on the roof of Upper School. On the opposite side of School Yard, the fifty-two stories of Lupton's Tower[5] gleamed white in the sunshine. College on their left and, on their right, the School Community Singery reared their venerable piles of ferro-concrete and vita-glass. In the centre of the quadrangle stood the quaint old chrome-steel statue of Our Ford.

Dr. Gaffney, the Provost, and Miss Keate,[6] the Head Mistress, received them as they stepped out of the plane.

"Do you have many twins here?" the Savage asked rather apprehensively, as they set out on their tour of inspection.

"Oh, no," the Provost answered. "Eton is reserved exclusively for upper-caste boys and girls. One egg, one adult. It makes education more difficult of course. But as they'll be called upon to take responsibilities and deal with unexpected emergencies, it can't be helped." He sighed.

Bernard, meanwhile, had taken a strong fancy to Miss Keate. "If you're free any Monday, Wednesday, or Friday evening," he was saying. Jerking his thumb towards the Savage, "He's curious, you know," Bernard added. "Quaint."

Miss Keate smiled (and her smile was really charming, he thought); said Thank you; would be delighted to come to one of his parties. The Provost opened a door.

Five minutes in that Alpha Double Plus classroom left John a trifle bewildered.

"What *is* elementary relativity?" he whispered to Bernard. Bernard tried to explain, then thought better of it and suggested that they should go to some other classroom.

From behind a door in the corridor leading to the Beta-Minus geography room, a ringing soprano voice called, "One, two, three, four," and then, with a weary impatience, "As you were."

"Malthusian Drill," explained the Head Mistress. "Most of our girls are freemartins, of course. I'm a freemartin myself." She smiled at Bernard. "But we have about eight hundred unsterilized ones who need constant drilling."

In the Beta-Minus geography room John learnt that "a savage reservation is a place which, owing to

4. Huxley was a student at Eton from 1908-1910 as well as a master there (from September 1917 until February 1919.)

5. The tower is named after Roger Lupton, Provost of Eton from 1503-1535.

6. John Keate (1773-1852) had been a headmaster at Eton, famous for the severity of his canings.

unfavourable climatic or geological conditions, or poverty of natural resources, has not been worth the expense of civilizing." A click; the room was darkened; and suddenly, on the screen above the Master's head, there were the *Penitentes* of Acoma[7] prostrating themselves before Our Lady, and wailing as John had heard them wail, confessing their sins before Jesus on the Cross, before the eagle image of Pookong. The young Etonians fairly shouted with laughter. Still wailing, the *Penitentes* rose to their feet, stripped off their upper garments and, with knotted whips, began to beat themselves, blow after blow. Redoubled, the laughter drowned even the amplified record of their groans.

"But why do they laugh?" asked the Savage in a pained bewilderment.

"Why?" The Provost turned towards him a still broadly grinning face. "*Why*? But because it's so extraordinarily funny."

In the cinematographic twilight, Bernard risked a gesture which, in the past, even total darkness would hardly have emboldened him to make. Strong in his new importance, he put his arm around the Head Mistress's waist. It yielded, willowily. He was just about to snatch a kiss or two and perhaps a gentle pinch, when the shutters clicked open again.

"Perhaps we had better go on," said Miss Keate, and moved towards the door.

"And this," said the Provost a moment later, "is Hypnopaedic Control Room."

Hundreds of synthetic music boxes, one for each dormitory, stood ranged in shelves round three sides of the room; pigeon-holed on the fourth were the paper sound-track rolls on which the various hypnopaedic lessons were printed.

"You slip the roll in here," explained Bernard, interrupting Dr. Gaffney, "press down this switch …"

"No, that one," corrected the Provost, annoyed.

"That one, then. The roll unwinds. The selenium cells transform the light impulses into sound waves, and …"

"And there you are," Dr. Gaffney concluded.

"Do they read Shakespeare?" asked the Savage as they walked, on their way to the Bio-chemical Laboratories, past the School Library.

"Certainly not," said the Head Mistress, blushing.

"Our library," said Dr. Gaffney, "contains only books of reference. If our young people need distraction, they can get it at the feelies. We don't encourage them to indulge in any solitary amusements."

Five bus-loads of boys and girls, singing or in a silent embracement, rolled past them over the vitrified highway.

"Just returned," explained Dr. Gaffney, while Bernard, whispering, made an appointment with the Head Mistress for that very evening, "from the Slough Crematorium. Death conditioning begins at eighteen months. Every tot spends two mornings a week in a Hospital for the Dying. All the best toys are kept there, and they get chocolate cream on death days. They learn to take dying as a matter of course."

"Like any other physiological process," put in the Head Mistress professionally.

Eight o'clock at the Savoy. It was all arranged.

On their way back to London they stopped at the Television Corporation's factory at Brentford.

"Do you mind waiting here a moment while I go and telephone?" asked Bernard.

The Savage waited and watched. The Main Day-Shift was just going off duty. Crowds of lower-caste workers were queued up in front of the monorail station–seven or eight hundred Gamma, Delta and Epsilon men and women, with not more than a dozen faces and statures between them. To each of them,

7. Penitentes (penitants) were members of a religious society of flagellants in Spanish-American communities of the southwestern U.S. who practise self-whipping and other forms of penitential self-torture particularly during Holy Week. [Merriam-Webster online.] Acoma is the name of one of the New Mexican pueblos.

with his or her ticket, the booking clerk pushed over a little cardboard pillbox. The long caterpillar of men and women moved slowly forward.

"What's in those" (remembering *The Merchant of Venice*) "those caskets?"[8] the Savage enquired when Bernard had rejoined him.

"The day's *soma* ration," Bernard answered rather indistinctly; for he was masticating a piece of Benito Hoover's chewing-gum. "They get it after their work's over. Four half-gramme tablets. Six on Saturdays."

He took John's arm affectionately and they walked back towards the helicopter.

Lenina came singing into the Changing Room.

"You seem very pleased with yourself," said Fanny.

"I *am* pleased," she answered. Zip! "Bernard rang up half an hour ago." Zip, zip! She stepped out of her shorts. "He has an unexpected engagement." Zip! "Asked me if I'd take the Savage to the feelies this evening. I must fly." She hurried away towards the bathroom.

"She's a lucky girl," Fanny said to herself as she watched Lenina go.

There was no envy in the comment; good-natured Fanny was merely stating a fact. Lenina *was* lucky; lucky in having shared with Bernard a generous portion of the Savage's immense celebrity, lucky in reflecting from her insignificant person the moment's supremely fashionable glory. Had not the Secretary of the Young Women's Fordian Association asked her to give a lecture about her experiences? Had she not been invited to the Annual Dinner of the Aphroditaeum Club? Had she not already appeared in the Feelytone[9] News—visibly, audibly and tactually appeared to countless millions all over the planet?

Hardly less flattering had been the attentions paid her by conspicuous individuals. The Resident World Controller's Second Secretary had asked her to dinner and breakfast. She had spent one week-end with the Ford Chief-Justice, and another with the Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury. The President of the Internal and External Secretions Corporation was perpetually on the phone, and she had been to Deauville with the Deputy-Governor of the Bank of Europe.

"It's wonderful, of course. And yet in a way," she had confessed to Fanny, "I feel as though I were getting something on false pretences. Because, of course, the first thing they all want to know is what it's like to make love to a Savage. And I have to say I don't know." She shook her head. "Most of the men don't believe me, of course. But it's true. I wish it weren't," she added sadly and sighed. "He's terribly good-looking; don't you think so?"

"But doesn't he like you?" asked Fanny.

"Sometimes I think he does and sometimes I think he doesn't. He always does his best to avoid me; goes out of the room when I come in; won't touch me; won't even look at me. But sometimes if I turn round suddenly, I catch him staring; and then–well, you know how men look when they like you."

Yes, Fanny knew.

"I can't make it out," said Lenina.

She couldn't make it out; and not only was bewildered; was also rather upset.

"Because, you see, Fanny, *I* like him."

Liked him more and more. Well, now there'd be a real chance, she thought, as she scented herself after her bath. Dab, dab, dab—a real chance. Her high spirits overflowed in a song.

"Hug me till you drug me, honey;
Kiss me till I'm in a coma;
Hug me, honey, snuggly bunny;
Love's as good as *soma*."

8. A reference to the gold, silver, and lead chests in MV 2.7.
9. An allusion to Movietone News, newsreels that ran in cinemas from 1928-1963 in the U.S., and, as British Movietone News, in the U.K. from 1929-1979.

The scent organ was playing a delightfully refreshing Herbal Capriccio–rippling arpeggios of thyme and lavender, of rosemary, basil, myrtle, tarragon; a series of daring modulations through the spice keys into ambergris; and a slow return through sandalwood, camphor, cedar and new-mown hay (with occasional subtle touches of discord—a whiff of kidney pudding, the faintest suspicion of pig's dung) back to the simple aromatics with which the piece began. The final blast of thyme died away; there was a round of applause; the lights went up. In the synthetic music machine the sound-track roll began to unwind. It was a trio for hyper-violin, super-cello and oboe-surrogate that now filled the air with its agreeable languor. Thirty or forty bars—and then, against this instrumental background, a much more than human voice began to warble; now throaty, now from the head, now hollow as a flute, now charged with yearning harmonics, it effortlessly passed from Gaspard's Forster's[10] low record on the very frontiers of musical tone to a trilled bat-note high above the highest C to which (in 1770, at the Ducal opera of Parma, and to the astonishment of Mozart) Lucrezia Ajugari,[11] alone of all the singers in history, once piercingly gave utterance.

Sunk in their pneumatic stalls, Lenina and the Savage sniffed and listened. It was now the turn also for eyes and skin. The house lights went down; fiery letters stood out solid and as though self-supported in the darkness. THREE WEEKS[12] IN A HELICOPTER . AN ALL-SUPER-SINGING, SYNTHETIC-TALKING, COLOURED, STEREOSCOPIC FEELY. WITH SYNCHRONIZED SCENT-ORGAN ACCOMPANIMENT.

"Take hold of those metal knobs on the arms of your chair," whispered Lenina. "Otherwise you won't get any of the feely effects." The Savage did as he was told.

Those fiery letters, meanwhile, had disappeared; there were ten seconds of complete darkness; then suddenly, dazzling and incomparably more solid-looking than they would have seemed in actual flesh and blood, far more real than reality, there stood the stereoscopic images, locked in one another's arms, of a gigantic negro and a golden-haired young brachycephalic Beta-Plus female.

The Savage started. That sensation on his lips! He lifted a hand to his mouth; the titillation ceased; let his hand fall back on the metal knob; it began again. The scent organ, meanwhile, breathed pure musk. Expiringly, a sound-track super-dove cooed "Oo-ooh"; and vibrating only thirty-two times a second, a deeper than African bass made answer: "Aa-aah." "Ooh-ah! Ooh-ah!" the stereoscopic lips came together again, and once more the facial erogenous zones of the six thousand spectators in the Alhambra tingled with almost intolerable galvanic pleasure. "Ooh …"

The plot of the film was extremely simple. A few minutes after the first Oohs and Aahs (a duet having been sung and a little love made on that famous bearskin, every hair of which—the Assistant Predestinator was perfectly right—could be separately and distinctly felt), the negro had a helicopter accident, fell on his head. Thump! what a twinge through the forehead! A chorus of *ow's* and *aie's* went up from the audience.

The concussion knocked all the negro's conditioning into a cocked hat. He developed for the Beta blonde an exclusive and maniacal passion. She protested. He persisted. There were struggles, pursuits, an assault on a rival, finally a sensational kidnapping. The Beta blond was ravished away into the sky and kept there, hovering, for three weeks in a wildly anti-social *tête-a-tête* with the black madman. Finally, after a whole series of adventures and much aerial acrobacy three handsome young Alphas succeeded in rescuing her. The negro was packed off to an Adult Re-conditioning Centre and the film ended happily and decorously, with the Beta blonde becoming the mistress of all her three rescuers. They interrupted themselves for a moment to sing a synthetic quartet, with full super-orchestral accompaniment and gardenias on the scent organ. Then the bearskin made a final appearance and, amid

10. German singer, conductor, and composer (1617-1673).
11. Italian coloratura soprano (1743-1783), known as "La Bastardella." The name is often spelt "Aguiari."
12. An allusion to the erotic novel *Three Weeks* (1907) by Elinor Glyn (1864-1943).

a blare of saxophones, the last stereoscopic kiss faded into darkness, the last electric titillation died on the lips like a dying moth that quivers, quivers, ever more feebly, ever more faintly, and at last is quiet, quite still.

But for Lenina the moth did not completely die. Even after the lights had gone up, while they were shuffling slowly along with the crowd towards the lifts, its ghost still fluttered against her lips, still traced fine shuddering roads of anxiety and pleasure across her skin. Her cheeks were flushed. She caught hold of the Savage's arm and pressed it, limp, against her side. He looked down at her for a moment, pale, pained, desiring, and ashamed of his desire. He was not worthy, not … Their eyes for a moment met. What treasures hers promised! A queen's ransom of temperament. Hastily he looked away, disengaged his imprisoned arm. He was obscurely terrified lest she should cease to be something he could feel himself unworthy of. "I don't think you ought to see things like that," he said, making haste to transfer from Lenina herself to the surrounding circumstances the blame for any past or possible future lapse from perfection. "Things like what, John?" "Like this horrible film."

"Horrible?" Lenina was genuinely astonished. "But I thought it was lovely."

"It was base," he said indignantly, "it was ignoble." She shook her head. "I don't know what you mean." Why was he so queer? Why did he go out of his way to spoil things?

In the taxicopter he hardly even looked at her. Bound by strong vows that had never been pronounced, obedient to laws that had long since ceased to run, he sat averted and in silence. Sometimes, as though a finger had plucked at some taut, almost breaking string, his whole body would shake with a sudden nervous start.

The taxicopter landed on the roof of Lenina's apartment house. "At last," she thought exultantly as she stepped out of the cab. At last—even though he *had* been so queer just now. Standing under a lamp, she peered into her hand mirror. At last. Yes, her nose *was* a bit shiny. She shook the loose powder from her puff. While he was paying off the taxi–there would just be time. She rubbed at the shininess, thinking: "He's terribly good-looking. No need for him to be shy like Bernard. And yet … Any other man would have done it long ago. Well, now at last." That fragment of a face in the little round mirror suddenly smiled at her.

"Good-night," said a strangled voice behind her. Lenina wheeled round. He was standing in the doorway of the cab, his eyes fixed, staring; had evidently been staring all this time while she was powdering her nose, waiting—but what for? or hesitating, trying to make up his mind, and all the time thinking, thinking—she could not imagine what extraordinary thoughts. "Good-night, Lenina," he repeated, and made a strange grimacing attempt to smile.

"But, John … I thought you were … I mean, aren't you? …" He shut the door and bent forward to say something to the driver. The cab shot up into the air.

Looking down through the window in the floor, the Savage could see Lenina's upturned face, pale in the bluish light of the lamps. The mouth was open, she was calling. Her foreshortened figure rushed away from him; the diminishing square of the roof seemed to be falling through the darkness.

Five minutes later he was back in his room. From its hiding-place he took out his mouse-nibbled volume, turned with religious care its stained and crumbled pages, and began to read *Othello*. Othello, he remembered, was like the hero of *Three Weeks in a Helicopter*—a black man.

Drying her eyes, Lenina walked across the roof to the lift. On her way down to the twenty-seventh floor she pulled out her *soma* bottle. One gramme, she decided, would not be enough; hers had been more than a one-gramme affliction. But if she took two grammes, she ran the risk of not waking up in time to-morrow morning. She compromised and, into her cupped left palm, shook out three half-gramme tablets.

202.

Brave New World: Chapter 12

Aldous Huxley

BERNARD had to shout through the locked door; the Savage would not open.

"But everybody's there, waiting for you."

"Let them wait," came back the muffled voice through the door.

"But you know quite well, John" (how difficult it is to sound persuasive at the top of one's voice!) "I asked them on purpose to meet you."

"You ought to have asked *me* first whether I wanted to meet *them*."

"But you always came before, John."

"That's precisely why I don't want to come again."

"Just to please me," Bernard bellowingly wheedled. "Won't you come to please me?"

"No."

"Do you seriously mean it?"

"Yes."

Despairingly, "But what shall I do?" Bernard wailed.

"Go to hell!" bawled the exasperated voice from within.

"But the Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury is there to-night." Bernard was almost in tears.

"*Ai yaa tákwa*!" It was only in Zuñi that the Savage could adequately express what he felt about the Arch-Community-Songster. "*Háni*!" he added as an afterthought; and then (with what derisive ferocity!): "*Sons éso tse-ná*." And he spat on the ground, as *Popé* might have done.

In the end Bernard had to slink back, diminished, to his rooms and inform the impatient assembly that the Savage would not be appearing that evening. The news was received with indignation. The men were furious at having been tricked into behaving politely to this insignificant fellow with the unsavoury reputation and the heretical opinions. The higher their position in the hierarchy, the deeper their resentment.

"To play such a joke on me," the Arch-Songster kept repeating, "on *me*!"

As for the women, they indignantly felt that they had been had on false pretences-had by a wretched little man who had had alcohol poured into his bottle by mistake—by a creature with a Gamma-Minus physique. It was an outrage, and they said so, more and more loudly. The Head Mistress of Eton was particularly scathing.

Lenina alone said nothing. Pale, her blue eyes clouded with an unwonted melancholy, she sat in a corner, cut off from those who surrounded her by an emotion which they did not share. She had come to the party filled with a strange feeling of anxious exultation. "In a few minutes," she had said to herself, as she entered the room, "I shall be seeing him, talking to him, telling him" (for she had come with her mind made up) "that I like him—more than anybody I've ever known. And then perhaps he'll say …"

What would he say? The blood had rushed to her cheeks.

"Why was he so strange the other night, after the feelies? So queer. And yet I'm absolutely sure he really does rather like me. I'm sure …"

It was at this moment that Bernard had made his announcement; the Savage wasn't coming to the party.

Lenina suddenly felt all the sensations normally experienced at the beginning of a Violent Passion Surrogate treatment—a sense of dreadful emptiness, a breathless apprehension, a nausea. Her heart seemed to stop beating.

"Perhaps it's because he doesn't like me," she said to herself. And at once this possibility became an established certainty: John had refused to come because he didn't like her. He didn't like her. …

"It really is a bit *too* thick," the Head Mistress of Eton was saying to the Director of Crematoria and Phosphorus Reclamation. "When I think that I actually …"

"Yes," came the voice of Fanny Crowne, "it's absolutely true about the alcohol. Some one I know knew some one who was working in the Embryo Store at the time. She said to my friend, and my friend said to me …"

"Too bad, too bad," said Henry Foster, sympathizing with the Arch-Community-Songster. "It may interest you to know that our ex-Director was on the point of transferring him to Iceland."

Pierced by every word that was spoken, the tight balloon of Bernard's happy self-confidence was leaking from a thousand wounds. Pale, distraught, abject and agitated, he moved among his guests, stammering incoherent apologies, assuring them that next time the Savage would certainly be there, begging them to sit down and take a carotene sandwich, a slice of vitamin A *pâté*, a glass of champagne-surrogate. They duly ate, but ignored him; drank and were either rude to his face or talked to one another about him, loudly and offensively, as though he had not been there.

"And now, my friends," said the Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury, in that beautiful ringing voice with which he led the proceedings at Ford's Day Celebrations, "Now, my friends, I think perhaps the time has come …" He rose, put down his glass, brushed from his purple viscose waistcoat the crumbs of a considerable collation, and walked towards the door.

Bernard darted forward to intercept him.

"Must you really, Arch-Songster? … It's very early still. I'd hoped you would …"

Yes, what hadn't he hoped, when Lenina confidentially told him that the Arch-Community-Songster would accept an invitation if it were sent. "He's really rather sweet, you know." And she had shown Bernard the little golden zipper-fastening in the form of a T which the Arch-Songster had given her as a memento of the week-end she had spent at Lambeth. *To meet the Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury and Mr. Savage*. Bernard had proclaimed his triumph on every invitation card. But the Savage had chosen this evening of all evenings to lock himself up in his room, to shout "*Háni*!" and even (it was lucky that Bernard didn't understand Zuñi) "*Sons éso tse-ná*!" What should have been the crowning moment of Bernard's whole career had turned out to be the moment of his greatest humiliation.

"I'd so much hoped …" he stammeringly repeated, looking up at the great dignitary with pleading and distracted eyes.

"My young friend," said the Arch-Community-Songster in a tone of loud and solemn severity; there was a general silence. "Let me give you a word of advice." He wagged his finger at Bernard. "Before it's too late. A word of good advice." (His voice became sepulchral.) "Mend your ways, my young friend, mend your ways." He made the sign of the T over him and turned away. "Lenina, my dear," he called in another tone. "Come with me."

Obediently, but unsmiling and (wholly insensible of the honour done to her) without elation, Lenina walked after him, out of the room. The other guests followed at a respectful interval. The last of them slammed the door. Bernard was all alone.

Punctured, utterly deflated, he dropped into a chair and, covering his face with his hands, began to weep. A few minutes later, however, he thought better of it and took four tablets of *soma*.

Upstairs in his room the Savage was reading *Romeo and Juliet*.

Lenina and the Arch-Community-Songster stepped out on to the roof of Lambeth Palace.[1] "Hurry up, my young friend—I mean, Lenina," called the Arch-Songster impatiently from the lift gates. Lenina, who had lingered for a moment to look at the moon, dropped her eyes and came hurrying across the roof to rejoin him.

"A New Theory of Biology" was the title of the paper which Mustapha Mond had just finished reading. He sat for some time, meditatively frowning, then picked up his pen and wrote across the title-page: "The author's mathematical treatment of the conception of purpose is novel and highly ingenious, but heretical and, so far as the present social order is concerned, dangerous and potentially subversive. *Not to be published*." He underlined the words. "The author will be kept under supervision. His transference to the Marine Biological Station of St. Helena[2] may become necessary." A pity, he thought, as he signed his name. It was a masterly piece of work. But once you began admitting explanations in terms of purpose—well, you didn't know what the result might be. It was the sort of idea that might easily decondition the more unsettled minds among the higher castes—make them lose their faith in happiness as the Sovereign Good and take to believing, instead, that the goal was somewhere beyond, somewhere outside the present human sphere, that the purpose of life was not the maintenance of well-being, but some intensification and refining of consciousness, some enlargement of knowledge. Which was, the Controller reflected, quite possibly true. But not, in the present circumstance, admissible. He picked up his pen again, and under the words "*Not to be published*" drew a second line, thicker and blacker than the first; then sighed, "What fun it would be," he thought, "if one didn't have to think about happiness!"

With closed eyes, his face shining with rapture, John was softly declaiming to vacancy:

"Oh! she doth teach the torches to burn bright.
It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night,
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear;
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear…"[3]

The golden T lay shining on Lenina's bosom. Sportively, the Arch-Community-Songster caught hold of it, sportively he pulled, pulled. "I think," said Lenina suddenly, breaking a long silence, "I'd better take a couple of grammes of *soma*."

Bernard, by this time, was fast asleep and smiling at the private paradise of his dreams. Smiling, smiling. But inexorably, every thirty seconds, the minute hand of the electric clock above his bed jumped forward with an almost imperceptible click. Click, click, click, click … And it was morning. Bernard was back among the miseries of space and time. It was in the lowest spirits that he taxied across to his work at the Conditioning Centre. The intoxication of success had evaporated; he was soberly his old self; and by contrast with the temporary balloon of these last weeks, the old self seemed unprecedentedly heavier than the surrounding atmosphere.

To this deflated Bernard the Savage showed himself unexpectedly sympathetic.

"You're more like what you were at Malpais," he said, when Bernard had told him his plaintive story. "Do you remember when we first talked together? Outside the little house. You're like what you were then."

"Because I'm unhappy again; that's why."

"Well, I'd rather be unhappy than have the sort of false, lying happiness you were having here."

1. The official London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury.
2. A tropical island in the South Atlantic. In 1815, the British government selected St. Helena as the place of detention for Napoleon Bonaparte.
3. Romeo's words upon first laying eyes on Juliet. R&J 1.5.41 ff.

"I like that," said Bernard bitterly. "When it's you who were the cause of it all. Refusing to come to my party and so turning them all against me!" He knew that what he was saying was absurd in its injustice; he admitted inwardly, and at last even aloud, the truth of all that the Savage now said about the worthlessness of friends who could be turned upon so slight a provocation into persecuting enemies. But in spite of this knowledge and these admissions, in spite of the fact that his friend's support and sympathy were now his only comfort, Bernard continued perversely to nourish, along with his quite genuine affection, a secret grievance against the Savage, to mediate a campaign of small revenges to be wreaked upon him. Nourishing a grievance against the Arch-Community-Songster was useless; there was no possibility of being revenged on the Chief Bottler or the Assistant Predestinator. As a victim, the Savage possessed, for Bernard, this enormous superiority over the others: that he was accessible. One of the principal functions of a friend is to suffer (in a milder and symbolic form) the punishments that we should like, but are unable, to inflict upon our enemies. Bernard's other victim-friend was Helmholtz. When, discomfited, he came and asked once more for the friendship which, in his prosperity, he had not thought it worth his while to preserve. Helmholtz gave it; and gave it without a reproach, without a comment, as though he had forgotten that there had ever been a quarrel. Touched, Bernard felt himself at the same time humiliated by this magnanimity—a magnanimity the more extraordinary and therefore the more humiliating in that it owed nothing to *soma* and everything to Helmholtz's character. It was the Helmholtz of daily life who forgot and forgave, not the Helmholtz of a half-gramme holiday. Bernard was duly grateful (it was an enormous comfort to have his friend again) and also duly resentful (it would be pleasure to take some revenge on Helmholtz for his generosity).

At their first meeting after the estrangement, Bernard poured out the tale of his miseries and accepted consolation. It was not till some days later that he learned, to his surprise and with a twinge of shame, that he was not the only one who had been in trouble. Helmholtz had also come into conflict with Authority.

"It was over some rhymes," he explained. "I was giving my usual course of Advanced Emotional Engineering for Third Year Students. Twelve lectures, of which the seventh is about rhymes. 'On the Use of Rhymes in Moral Propaganda and Advertisement,' to be precise. I always illustrate my lecture with a lot of technical examples. This time I thought I'd give them one I'd just written myself. Pure madness, of course; but I couldn't resist it." He laughed. "I was curious to see what their reactions would be. Besides," he added more gravely, "I wanted to do a bit of propaganda; I was trying to engineer them into feeling as I'd felt when I wrote the rhymes. Ford!" He laughed again. "What an outcry there was! The Principal had me up and threatened to hand me the immediate sack. I'm a marked man." "But what were your rhymes?" Bernard asked. "They were about being alone." Bernard's eyebrows went up.

"I'll recite them to you, if you like." And Helmholtz began:

"Yesterday's committee,
Sticks, but a broken drum,
Midnight in the City,
Flutes in a vacuum,
Shut lips, sleeping faces,
Every stopped machine,
The dumb and littered places
Where crowds have been—
All silences rejoice,
Weep (loudly or low),
Speak—but with the voice
Of whom, I do not know.

Absence, say, of Susan's,
Absence of Egeria 's
Arms and respective bosoms,
Lips and, ah, posteriors,
Slowly form a presence;
Whose? and, I ask, of what
So absurd an essence,
That something, which is not,
Nevertheless should populate
Empty night more solidly
Than that with which we copulate,
Why should it seem so squalidly?

Well, I gave them that as an example, and they reported me to the Principal."

"I'm not surprised," said Bernard. "It's flatly against all their sleep-teaching. Remember, they've had at least a quarter of a million warnings against solitude."

"I know. But I thought I'd like to see what the effect would be." "Well, you've seen now."

Helmholtz only laughed. "I feel," he said, after a silence, as though I were just beginning to have something to write about. As though I were beginning to be able to use that power I feel I've got inside me—that extra, latent power. Something seems to be coming to me." In spite of all his troubles, he seemed, Bernard thought, profoundly happy.

Helmholtz and the Savage took to one another at once. So cordially indeed that Bernard felt a sharp pang of jealousy. In all these weeks he had never come to so close an intimacy with the Savage as Helmholtz immediately achieved. Watching them, listening to their talk, he found himself sometimes resentfully wishing that he had never brought them together. He was ashamed of his jealousy and alternately made efforts of will and took *soma* to keep himself from feeling it. But the efforts were not very successful; and between the *soma*-holidays there were, of necessity, intervals. The odious sentiment kept on returning.

At his third meeting with the Savage, Helmholtz recited his rhymes on Solitude. "What do you think of them?" he asked when he had done.

The Savage shook his head. "Listen to this," was his answer; and unlocking the drawer in which he kept his mouse-eaten book, he opened and read:

"Let the bird of loudest lay
On the sole Arabian tree,
Herald sad and trumpet be …"[4]

Helmholtz listened with a growing excitement. At "sole Arabian tree" he started; at "thou shrieking harbinger" he smiled with sudden pleasure; at "every fowl of tyrant wing" the blood rushed up into his cheeks; but at "defunctive music" he turned pale and trembled with an unprecedented emotion. The Savage read on:

"Property was thus appall'd,
That the self was not the same;
Single nature's double name
Neither two nor one was call'd.

Reason in itself confounded

4. The opening lines of Shakespeare's "The Phoenix and the Turtle."

Saw division grow together…”

“Orgy-porgy!” said Bernard, interrupting the reading with a loud, unpleasant laugh. “It’s just a Solidarity Service hymn.” He was revenging himself on his two friends for liking one another more than they liked him.

In the course of their next two or three meetings he frequently repeated this little act of vengeance. It was simple and, since both Helmholtz and the Savage were dreadfully pained by the shattering and defilement of a favourite poetic crystal, extremely effective. In the end, Helmholtz threatened to kick him out of the room if he dared to interrupt again. And yet, strangely enough, the next interruption, the most disgraceful of all, came from Helmholtz himself. The Savage was reading *Romeo and Juliet* aloud—reading (for all the time he was seeing himself as Romeo and Lenina as Juliet) with an intense and quivering passion. Helmholtz had listened to the scene of the lovers’ first meeting with a puzzled interest. The scene in the orchard had delighted him with its poetry; but the sentiments expressed had made him smile. Getting into such a state about having a girl—it seemed rather ridiculous. But, taken detail by verbal detail, what a superb piece of emotional engineering! “That old fellow,” he said, “he makes our best propaganda technicians look absolutely silly.” The Savage smiled triumphantly and resumed his reading. All went tolerably well until, in the last scene of the third act, Capulet and Lady Capulet began to bully Juliet to marry Paris. Helmholtz had been restless throughout the entire scene; but when, pathetically mimed by the Savage, Juliet cried out:

“Is there no pity sitting in the clouds,
That sees into the bottom of my grief?
O sweet my mother, cast me not away:
Delay this marriage for a month, a week;
Or, if you do not, make the bridal bed
In that dim monument where Tybalt lies …”[5]

when Juliet said this, Helmholtz broke out in an explosion of uncontrollable guffawing.

The mother and father (grotesque obscenity) forcing the daughter to have some one she didn’t want! And the idiotic girl not saying that she was having some one else whom (for the moment, at any rate) she preferred! In its smutty absurdity the situation was irresistibly comical. He had managed, with a heroic effort, to hold down the mounting pressure of his hilarity; but “sweet mother” (in the Savage’s tremulous tone of anguish) and the reference to Tybalt lying dead, but evidently uncremated and wasting his phosphorus on a dim monument, were too much for him. He laughed and laughed till the tears streamed down his face—quenchlessly laughed while, pale with a sense of outrage, the Savage looked at him over the top of his book and then, as the laughter still continued, closed it indignantly, got up and, with the gesture of one who removes his pearl from before swine, locked it away in its drawer.

“And yet,” said Helmholtz when, having recovered breath enough to apologize, he had mollified the Savage into listening to his explanations, “I know quite well that one needs ridiculous, mad situations like that; one can’t write really well about anything else. Why was that old fellow such a marvellous propaganda technician? Because he had so many insane, excruciating things to get excited about. You’ve got to be hurt and upset; otherwise you can’t think of the really good, penetrating, X-rayish phrases. But fathers and mothers!” He shook his head. “You can’t expect me to keep a straight face about fathers and mothers. And who’s going to get excited about a boy having a girl or not having her?” (The Savage winced; but Helmholtz, who was staring pensively at the floor, saw nothing.) “No.” he concluded, with a sigh, “it won’t do. We need some other kind of madness and violence. But what? What? Where can one find it?” He was silent; then, shaking his head, “I don’t know,” he said at last, “I don’t know.”

5. Romeo and Juliet 3.5.196 ff.

203.

Brave New World: Chapter 13

Aldous Huxley

HENRY FOSTER loomed up through the twilight of the Embryo Store.

"Like to come to a feely this evening?"

Lenina shook her head without speaking.

"Going out with some one else?" It interested him to know which of his friends was being had by which other. "Is it Benito?" he questioned.

She shook her head again.

Henry detected the weariness in those purple eyes, the pallor beneath that glaze of lupus, the sadness at the corners of the unsmiling crimson mouth. "You're not feeling ill, are you?" he asked, a trifle anxiously, afraid that she might be suffering from one of the few remaining infectious diseases.

Yet once more Lenina shook her head.

"Anyhow, you ought to go and see the doctor," said Henry. "A doctor a day keeps the jim-jams away," he added heartily, driving home his hypnopaedic adage with a clap on the shoulder. "Perhaps you need a Pregnancy Substitute," he suggested. "Or else an extra-strong V.P.S. treatment. Sometimes, you know, the standard passion surrogate isn't quite …"

"Oh, for Ford's sake," said Lenina, breaking her stubborn silence, "shut up!" And she turned back to her neglected embryos.

A V.P.S. treatment indeed! She would have laughed, if she hadn't been on the point of crying. As though she hadn't got enough V. P. of her own! She sighed profoundly as she refilled her syringe. "John," she murmured to herself, "John …" Then "My Ford," she wondered, "have I given this one its sleeping sickness injection, or haven't I?" She simply couldn't remember. In the end, she decided not to run the risk of letting it have a second dose, and moved down the line to the next bottle.

Twenty-two years, eight months, and four days from that moment, a promising young Alpha-Minus administrator at Mwanza-Mwanza was to die of trypanosomiasis—the first case for over half a century. Sighing, Lenina went on with her work.

An hour later, in the Changing Room, Fanny was energetically protesting. "But it's absurd to let yourself get into a state like this. Simply absurd," she repeated. "And what about? A man—*one* man."

"But he's the one I want."

"As though there weren't millions of other men in the world."

"But I don't want them."

"How can you know till you've tried?"

"I have tried."

"But how many?" asked Fanny, shrugging her shoulders contemptuously. "One, two?"

"Dozens. But," shaking her head, "it wasn't any good," she added.

"Well, you must persevere," said Fanny sententiously. But it was obvious that her confidence in her own prescriptions had been shaken. "Nothing can be achieved without perseverance."

"But meanwhile …"

"Don't think of him."

“I can’t help it.”

“Take *soma*, then.”

“I do.”

“Well, go on.”

“But in the intervals I still like him. I shall always like him.”

“Well, if that’s the case,” said Fanny, with decision, “why don’t you just go and take him. Whether he wants it or no.”

“But if you knew how terribly *queer* he was!”

“All the more reason for taking a firm line.”

“It’s all very well to *say* that.”

“Don’t stand any nonsense. Act.” Fanny’s voice was a trumpet; she might have been a Y.W.F.A. lecturer giving an evening talk to adolescent Beta-Minuses. “Yes, act—at once. Do it now.”

“I’d be scared,” said Lenina.

“Well, you’ve only got to take half a gramme of *soma* first. And now I’m going to have my bath.” She marched off, trailing her towel.

The bell rang, and the Savage, who was impatiently hoping that Helmholtz would come that afternoon (for having at last made up his mind to talk to Helmholtz about Lenina, he could not bear to postpone his confidences a moment longer), jumped up and ran to the door.

“I had a premonition it was you, Helmholtz,” he shouted as he opened.

On the threshold, in a white acetate-satin sailor suit, and with a round white cap rakishly tilted over her left ear, stood Lenina.

“Oh!” said the Savage, as though some one had struck him a heavy blow.

Half a gramme had been enough to make Lenina forget her fears and her embarrassments. “Hullo, John,” she said, smiling, and walked past him into the room. Automatically he closed the door and followed her. Lenina sat down. There was a long silence.

“You don’t seem very glad to see me, John,” she said at last.

“Not glad?” The Savage looked at her reproachfully; then suddenly fell on his knees before her and, taking Lenina’s hand, reverently kissed it. “Not glad? Oh, if you only knew,” he whispered and, venturing to raise his eyes to her face, “Admired Lenina,” he went on, “indeed the top of admiration, worth what’s dearest in the world.”[1] She smiled at him with a luscious tenderness. “Oh, you so perfect” (she was leaning towards him with parted lips), “so perfect and so peerless are created” (nearer and nearer) “of every creature’s best.” Still nearer. The Savage suddenly scrambled to his feet. “That’s why,” he said speaking with averted face, “I wanted to do something first … I mean, to show I was worthy of you. Not that I could ever really be that. But at any rate to show I wasn’t absolutely *un*worthy. I wanted to do *something*.”

“Why should you think it necessary …” Lenina began, but left the sentence unfinished. There was a note of irritation in her voice. When one has leant forward, nearer and nearer, with parted lips—only to find oneself, quite suddenly, as a clumsy oaf scrambles to his feet, leaning towards nothing at all—well, there is a reason, even with half a gramme of *soma* circulating in one’s blood-stream, a genuine reason for annoyance.

“At Malpais,” the Savage was incoherently mumbling, “you had to bring her the skin of a mountain lion—I mean, when you wanted to marry some one. Or else a wolf.”

“There aren’t any lions in England,” Lenina almost snapped.

“And even if there were,” the Savage added, with sudden contemptuous resentment, “people would kill them out of helicopters, I suppose, with poison gas or something. I wouldn’t do that, Lenina.” He

1. John quotes Ferdinand’s speech to Miranda, *The Tempest* 3.1.37 ff.

squared his shoulders, he ventured to look at her and was met with a stare of annoyed incomprehension. Confused, "I'll do anything," he went on, more and more incoherently. "Anything you tell me. There be some sports are painful—you know. But their labour delight in them sets off.[2] That's what I feel. I mean I'd sweep the floor if you wanted."

"But we've got vacuum cleaners here," said Lenina in bewilderment. "It isn't necessary."

"No, of course it isn't *necessary*. But some kinds of baseness are nobly undergone. I'd like to undergo something nobly. Don't you see?"

"But if there *are* vacuum cleaners …"

"That's not the point."

"And Epsilon Semi-Morons to work them," she went on, "well, really, *why*?"

"Why? But for you, for *you*. Just to show that I …"

"And what on earth vacuum cleaners have got to do with lions …"

"To show how much …"

"Or lions with being glad to see me …" She was getting more and more exasperated.

"How much I love you, Lenina," he brought out almost desperately.

An emblem of the inner tide of startled elation, the blood rushed up into Lenina's cheeks. "Do you mean it, John?"

"But I hadn't meant to say so," cried the Savage, clasping his hands in a kind of agony. "Not until … Listen, Lenina; in Malpais people get married."

"Get what?" The irritation had begun to creep back into her voice. What was he talking about now?

"For always. They make a promise to live together for always."

"What a horrible idea!" Lenina was genuinely shocked.

"Outliving beauty's outward with a mind that cloth renew swifter than blood decays."[3]

"*What*?"

"It's like that in Shakespeare too. 'If thou cost break her virgin knot before all sanctimonious ceremonies may with full and holy rite …'"[4]

"For Ford's sake, John, talk sense. I can't understand a word you say. First it's vacuum cleaners; then it's knots. You're driving me crazy." She jumped up and, as though afraid that he might run away from her physically, as well as with his mind, caught him by the wrist. "Answer me this question: do you really like me, or don't you?"

There was a moment's silence; then, in a very low voice, "I love you more than anything in the world," he said.

"Then why on earth didn't you say so?" she cried, and so intense was her exasperation that she drove her sharp nails into the skin of his wrist. "Instead of drivelling away about knots and vacuum cleaners and lions, and making me miserable for weeks and weeks."

She released his hand and flung it angrily away from her.

"If I didn't like you so much," she said, "I'd be furious with you."

And suddenly her arms were round his neck; he felt her lips soft against his own. So deliciously soft, so warm and electric that inevitably he found himself thinking of the embraces in *Three Weeks in a Helicopter*. Ooh! ooh! the stereoscopic blonde and anh! the more than real blackamoor. Horror, horror, horror… he fired to disengage himself; but Lenina tightened her embrace.

"Why didn't you say so?" she whispered, drawing back her face to look at him. Her eyes were tenderly reproachful.

2. Ferdinand speaks these lines at the beginning of *The Tempest* 3.1. Prospero's imposition of menial labour becomes pleasurable to Ferdinand, since he will be in the service of Miranda.
3. See *Troilus and Cressida* 3.2.149 ff.
4. See *Tempest* 4.1. 15ff. Prosperous warns Ferdinand not to seduce Miranda before they marry.

"The murkiest den, the most opportune place" (the voice of conscience thundered poetically), "the strongest suggestion our worser genius can, shall never melt mine honour into lust. Never, never!" he resolved.

"You silly boy!" she was saying. "I wanted you so much. And if you wanted me too, why didn't you? …"

"But, Lenina …" he began protesting; and as she immediately untwined her arms, as she stepped away from him, he thought, for a moment, that she had taken his unspoken hint. But when she unbuckled her white patent cartridge belt and hung it carefully over the back of a chair, he began to suspect that he had been mistaken.

"Lenina!" he repeated apprehensively.

She put her hand to her neck and gave a long vertical pull; her white sailor's blouse was ripped to the hem; suspicion condensed into a too, too solid certainty. "Lenina, what *are* you doing?"

Zip, zip! Her answer was wordless. She stepped out of her bell-bottomed trousers. Her zippicamiknicks were a pale shell pink. The Arch-Community-Songster's golden T dangled at her breast.

"For those milk paps that through the window bars bore at men's eyes…"[5] The singing, thundering, magical words made her seem doubly dangerous, doubly alluring. Soft, soft, but how piercing! boring and drilling into reason, tunnelling through resolution. "The strongest oaths are straw to the fire i' the blood. Be more abstemious, or else …"[6]

Zip! The rounded pinkness fell apart like a neatly divided apple. A wriggle of the arms, a lifting first of the right foot, then the left: the zippicamiknicks were lying lifeless and as though deflated on the floor.

Still wearing her shoes and socks, and her rakishly tilted round white cap, she advanced towards him. "Darling. *Darling*! If only you'd said so before!" She held out her arms.

But instead of also saying "Darling!" and holding out *his* arms, the Savage retreated in terror, flapping his hands at her as though he were trying to scare away some intruding and dangerous animal. Four backwards steps, and he was brought to bay against the wall.

"Sweet!" said Lenina and, laying her hands on his shoulders, pressed herself against him. "Put your arms round me," she commanded. "Hug me till you drug me, honey." She too had poetry at her command, knew words that sang and were spells and beat drums. "Kiss me"; she closed her eyes, she let her voice sink to a sleepy murmur, "Kiss me till I'm in a coma. Hug me, honey, snuggly …"

The Savage caught her by the wrists, tore her hands from his shoulders, thrust her roughly away at arm's length.

"Ow, you're hurting me, you're … oh!" She was suddenly silent. Terror had made her forget the pain. Opening her eyes, she had seen his face—no, not *his* face, a ferocious stranger's, pale, distorted, twitching with some insane, inexplicable fury. Aghast, "But what is it, John?" she whispered. He did not answer, but only stared into her face with those mad eyes. The hands that held her wrists were trembling. He breathed deeply and irregularly. Faint almost to imperceptibility, but appalling, she suddenly heard the grinding of his teeth. "What is it?" she almost screamed.

And as though awakened by her cry he caught her by the shoulders and shook her. "Whore!" he shouted "Whore! Impudent strumpet!"[7]

"Oh, don't, do-on't," she protested in a voice made grotesquely tremulous by his shaking.

"Whore!"

"Plea-ease."

5. *Timon of Athens* 4.3.115 ff.
6. *Tempest* 4.1.52-54.
7. *Othello* 4.2. 82. Othello accuses Desdemona of adultery and of being an impudent (shameless) strumpet. This phrase is omitted from the Folio version.

"Damned whore!"

"A gra-amme is be-etter…" she began.

The Savage pushed her away with such force that she staggered and fell. "Go," he shouted, standing over her menacingly, "get out of my sight or I'll kill you." He clenched his fists.

Lenina raised her arm to cover her face. "No, please don't, John …"

"Hurry up. Quick!"

One arm still raised, and following his every movement with a terrified eye, she scrambled to her feet and still crouching, still covering her head, made a dash for the bathroom.

The noise of that prodigious slap by which her departure was accelerated was like a pistol shot.

"Ow!" Lenina bounded forward.

Safely locked into the bathroom, she had leisure to take stock of her injuries. Standing with her back to the mirror, she twisted her head. Looking over her left shoulder she could see the imprint of an open hand standing out distinct and crimson on the pearly flesh. Gingerly she rubbed the wounded spot.

Outside, in the other room, the Savage was striding up and down, marching, marching to the drums and music of magical words. "The wren goes to't and the small gilded fly does lecher in my sight."[8] Maddeningly they rumbled in his ears. "The fitchew nor the soiled horse goes to't with a more riotous appetite. Down from the waist they are Centaurs, though women all above. But to the girdle do the gods inherit. Beneath is all the fiend's. There's hell, there's darkness, there is the sulphurous pit, burning scalding, stench, consumption; fie, fie, fie, pain, pain! Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination.[9]"

"John!" ventured a small ingratiating voice from the bathroom. "John!"

"O thou weed, who are so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet that the sense aches at thee. Was this most goodly book made to write 'whore' upon? Heaven stops the nose at it …"[10]

But her perfume still hung about him, his jacket was white with the powder that had scented her velvety body. "Impudent strumpet, impudent strumpet, impudent strumpet." The inexorable rhythm beat itself out. "Impudent …"

"John, do you think I might have my clothes?"

He picked up the bell-bottomed trousers, the blouse, the zippicami-knicks.

"Open!" he ordered, kicking the door.

"No, I won't." The voice was frightened and defiant.

"Well, how do you expect me to give them to you?"

"Push them through the ventilator over the door."

He did what she suggested and returned to his uneasy pacing of the room. "Impudent strumpet, impudent strumpet. The devil Luxury with his fat rump and potato finger…"[11]

"John."

He would not answer. "Fat rump and potato finger."

"John."

"What is it?" he asked gruffly.

"I wonder if you'd mind giving me my Malthusian belt."

Lenina sat, listening to the footsteps in the other room, wondering, as she listened, how long he was likely to go tramping up and down like that; whether she would have to wait until he left the flat; or if it would be safe, after allowing his madness a reasonable time to subside, to open the bathroom door and make a dash for it.

8. *King Lear* 4.6.110 ff.
9. *King Lear* 4.6.119-128.
10. *Othello* 4.2.68 ff.
11. *Troilus and Cressida* 5.2.55. The Spanish potato was thought to be an aphrodisiac.

She was interrupted in the midst of these uneasy speculations by the sound of the telephone bell ringing in the other room. Abruptly the tramping ceased. She heard the voice of the Savage parleying with silence. “Hullo.”

“Yes.”

“If I do not usurp myself, I am.”[12]

“Yes, didn’t you hear me say so? Mr. Savage speaking.”

“What? Who’s ill? Of course it interests me.”

“But is it serious? Is she really bad? I’ll go at once …”

“Not in her rooms any more? Where has she been taken?’

“Oh, my God! What’s the address?”

“Three Park Lane—is that it? Three? Thanks.”

Lenina heard the click of the replaced receiver, then hurrying steps. A door slammed. There was silence. Was he really gone?

With an infinity of precautions she opened the door a quarter of an inch; peeped through the crack; was encouraged by the view of emptiness; opened a little further, and put her whole head out; finally tiptoed into the room; stood for a few seconds with strongly beating heart, listening, listening; then darted to the front door, opened, slipped through, slammed, ran. It was not till she was in the lift and actually dropping down the well that she began to feel herself secure.

12. *Twelfth Night* 1.5.166.

204.

Brave New World: Chapter 14

Aldous Huxley

THE Park Lane Hospital for the Dying was a sixty-storey tower of primrose tiles. As the Savage stepped out of his taxicopter a convoy of gaily-coloured aerial hearses rose whirring from the roof and darted away across the Park, westwards, bound for the Slough Crematorium. At the lift gates the presiding porter gave him the information he required, and he dropped down to Ward 81 (a Galloping Senility ward, the porter explained) on the seventeenth floor.

It was a large room bright with sunshine and yellow paint, and containing twenty beds, all occupied. Linda was dying in company—in company and with all the modern conveniences. The air was continuously alive with gay synthetic melodies. At the foot of every bed, confronting its moribund occupant, was a television box. Television was left on, a running tap, from morning till night. Every quarter of an hour the prevailing perfume of the room was automatically changed. “We try,” explained the nurse, who had taken charge of the Savage at the door, “we try to create a thoroughly pleasant atmosphere here—something between a first-class hotel and a feely-palace, if you take my meaning.”

“Where is she?” asked the Savage, ignoring these polite explanations.

The nurse was offended. “You are in a hurry,” she said.

“Is there any hope?” he asked.

“You mean, of her not dying?” (He nodded.) “No, of course there isn’t. When somebody’s sent here, there’s no …” Startled by the expression of distress on his pale face, she suddenly broke off. “Why, whatever is the matter?” she asked. She was not accustomed to this kind of thing in visitors. (Not that there were many visitors anyhow: or any reason why there should be many visitors.) “You’re not feeling ill, are you?”

He shook his head. “She’s my mother,” he said in a scarcely audible voice.

The nurse glanced at him with startled, horrified eyes; then quickly looked away. From throat to temple she was all one hot blush.

“Take me to her,” said the Savage, making an effort to speak in an ordinary tone.

Still blushing, she led the way down the ward. Faces still fresh and unwithered (for senility galloped so hard that it had no time to age the cheeks—only the heart and brain) turned as they passed. Their progress was followed by the blank, incurious eyes of second infancy. The Savage shuddered as he looked.

Linda was lying in the last of the long row of beds, next to the wall. Propped up on pillows, she was watching the Semi-finals of the South American Riemann-Surface Tennis Championship, which were being played in silent and diminished reproduction on the screen of the television box at the foot of the bed. Hither and thither across their square of illuminated glass the little figures noiselessly darted, like fish in an aquarium—the silent but agitated inhabitants of another world.

Linda looked on, vaguely and uncomprehendingly smiling. Her pale, bloated face wore an expression of imbecile happiness. Every now and then her eyelids closed, and for a few seconds she seemed to be dozing. Then with a little start she would wake up again—wake up to the aquarium antics of the

Tennis Champions, to the Super-Vox-Wurlitzeriana[1] rendering of "Hug me till you drug me, honey," to the warm draught of verbena that came blowing through the ventilator above her head—would wake to these things, or rather to a dream of which these things, transformed and embellished by the *soma* in her blood, were the marvellous constituents, and smile once more her broken and discoloured smile of infantile contentment.

"Well, I must go," said the nurse. "I've got my batch of children coming. Besides, there's Number 3." She pointed up the ward. "Might go off any minute now. Well, make yourself comfortable." She walked briskly away.

The Savage sat down beside the bed.

"Linda," he whispered, taking her hand.

At the sound of her name, she turned. Her vague eyes brightened with recognition. She squeezed his hand, she smiled, her lips moved; then quite suddenly her head fell forward. She was asleep. He sat watching her—seeking through the tired flesh, seeking and finding that young, bright face which had stooped over his childhood in Malpais, remembering (and he closed his eyes) her voice, her movements, all the events of their life together. "Streptocock-Gee to Banbury T …"[2] How beautiful her singing had been! And those childish rhymes, how magically strange and mysterious!

A, B, C, vitamin D:

The fat's in the liver, the cod's in the sea.[3]

He felt the hot tears welling up behind his eyelids as he recalled the words and Linda's voice as she repeated them. And then the reading lessons: The tot is in the pot, the cat is on the mat; and the Elementary Instructions for Beta Workers in the Embryo Store. And long evenings by the fire or, in summertime, on the roof of the little house, when she told him those stories about the Other Place, outside the Reservation: that beautiful, beautiful Other Place, whose memory, as of a heaven, a paradise of goodness and loveliness, he still kept whole and intact, undefiled by contact with the reality of this real London, these actual civilized men and women.

A sudden noise of shrill voices made him open his eyes and, after hastily brushing away the tears, look round. What seemed an interminable stream of identical eight-year-old male twins was pouring into the room. Twin after twin, twin after twin, they came—a nightmare. Their faces, their repeated face—for there was only one between the lot of them—puggishly stared, all nostrils and pale goggling eyes. Their uniform was khaki. All their mouths hung open. Squealing and chattering they entered. In a moment, it seemed, the ward was maggoty with them. They swarmed between the beds, clambered over, crawled under, peeped into the television boxes, made faces at the patients. Linda astonished and rather alarmed them. A group stood clustered at the foot of her bed, staring with the frightened and stupid curiosity of animals suddenly confronted by the unknown. "Oh, look, look!" They spoke in low, scared voices. "Whatever is the matter with her? Why is she so fat?"

They had never seen a face like hers before—had never seen a face that was not youthful and taut-skinned, a body that had ceased to be slim and upright. All these moribund sexagenarians had the appearance of childish girls. At forty-four, Linda seemed, by contrast, a monster of flaccid and distorted senility.

"Isn't she awful?" came the whispered comments. "Look at her teeth!" Suddenly from under the bed a pug-faced twin popped up between John's chair and the wall, and began peering into Linda's sleeping face. "I say …" he began; but the sentence ended prematurely in a squeal. The Savage had seized him by the collar, lifted him clear over the chair and, with a smart box on the ears, sent him howling away. His

1. A large commercial pipe organ used in cinemas. The Wurlitzer organ was invented by Rudolph Wurlitzer (1831-1914). Later, the Wurlitzer firm marketed jukeboxes.
2. cf. the nursery rhyme "Ride a cockhorse to Banbury Cross/To see a fine lady upon a white horse."
3. A parody of the nursery rhyme "Little Boy Blue, come blow your horn/The sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the corn."

yells brought the Head Nurse hurrying to the rescue. "What have you been doing to him?" she demanded fiercely. "I won't have you striking the children."

"Well then, keep them away from this bed." The Savage's voice was trembling with indignation. "What are these filthy little brats doing here at all? It's disgraceful!"

"Disgraceful? But what do you mean? They're being death-conditioned. And I tell you," she warned him truculently, "if I have any more of your interference with their conditioning, I'll send for the porters and have you thrown out."

The Savage rose to his feet and took a couple of steps towards her. His movements and the expression on his face were so menacing that the nurse fell back in terror. With a great effort he checked himself and, without speaking, turned away and sat down again by the bed. Reassured, but with a dignity that was a trifle shrill and uncertain, "I've warned you," said the nurse, "I've warned you," said the nurse, "so mind." Still, she led the too inquisitive twins away and made them join in the game of hunt-the-zipper,[4] which had been organized by one of her colleagues at the other end of the room.

"Run along now and have your cup of caffeine solution, dear," she said to the other nurse. The exercise of authority restored her confidence, made her feel better. "Now children!" she called.

Linda had stirred uneasily, had opened her eyes for a moment, looked vaguely around, and then once more dropped off to sleep. Sitting beside her, the Savage tried hard to recapture his mood of a few minutes before. "A, B, C, vitamin D," he repeated to himself, as though the words were a spell that would restore the dead past to life. But the spell was ineffective. Obstinately the beautiful memories refused to rise; there was only a hateful resurrection of jealousies and uglinesses and miseries. Popé with the blood trickling down from his cut shoulder; and Linda hideously asleep, and the flies buzzing round the spilt *mescal* on the floor beside the bed; and the boys calling those names as she passed. … Ah, no, no! He shut his eyes, he shook his head in strenuous denial of these memories. "A, B, C, vitamin D …" He tried to think of those times when he sat on her knees and she put her arms about him and sang, over and over again, rocking him, rocking him to sleep. "A, B, C, vitamin D, vitamin D, vitamin D …"

The Super-Vox-Wurlitzeriana had risen to a sobbing crescendo; and suddenly the verbena gave place, in the scent-circulating system, to an intense patchouli. Linda stirred, woke up, stared for a few seconds bewilderly at the Semi-finalists, then, lifting her face, sniffed once or twice at the newly perfumed air and suddenly smiled—a smile of childish ecstasy.

"Popé!" she murmured, and closed her eyes. "Oh, I do so like it, I do …" She sighed and let herself sink back into the pillows.

"But, Linda!" The Savage spoke imploringly, "Don't you know me?" He had tried so hard, had done his very best; why wouldn't she allow him to forget? He squeezed her limp hand almost with violence, as though he would force her to come back from this dream of ignoble pleasures, from these base and hateful memories—back into the present, back into reality: the appalling present, the awful reality—but sublime, but significant, but desperately important precisely because of the imminence of that which made them so fearful. "Don't you know me, Linda?"

He felt the faint answering pressure of her hand. The tears started into his eyes. He bent over her and kissed her.

Her lips moved. "Popé!" she whispered again, and it was as though he had had a pailful of ordure thrown in his face.

Anger suddenly boiled up in him. Balked for the second time, the passion of his grief had found another outlet, was transformed into a passion of agonized rage.

4. A variant on the circle game "hunt-the-slipper." The word "zipper" was apparently coined by the B. F. Goodrich Co., but in association with boots or galoshes. The first entry in the Oxford English Dictionary was from an advertisement in *Scribner's Magazine* (1925) Oct. 22/2 (advt.) "No fastening is so quick, secure, or popular as the 'zipper.'"

"But I'm John!" he shouted. "I'm John!" And in his furious misery he actually caught her by the shoulder and shook her.

Linda's eyes fluttered open; she saw him, knew him—"John!"—but situated the real face, the real and violent hands, in an imaginary world—among the inward and private equivalents of patchouli and the Super-Wurlitzer, among the transfigured memories and the strangely transposed sensations that constituted the universe of her dream. She knew him for John, her son, but fancied him an intruder into that paradisal Malpais where she had been spending her *soma*-holiday with Popé. He was angry because she liked Popé, he was shaking her because Popé was there in the bed—as though there were something wrong, as though all civilized people didn't do the same. "Every one belongs to every …" Her voice suddenly died into an almost inaudible breathless croaking. Her mouth fell open: she made a desperate effort to fill her lungs with air. But it was as though she had forgotten how to breathe. She tried to cry out—but no sound came; only the terror of her staring eyes revealed what she was suffering. Her hands went to her throat, then clawed at the air—the air she could no longer breathe, the air that, for her, had ceased to exist.

The Savage was on his feet, bent over her. "What is it, Linda? What is it?" His voice was imploring; it was as though he were begging to be reassured.

The look she gave him was charged with an unspeakable terror—with terror and, it seemed to him, reproach. She tried to raise herself in bed, but fell back on to the pillows. Her face was horribly distorted, her lips blue.

The Savage turned and ran up the ward. "Quick, quick!" he shouted. "Quick!"

Standing in the centre of a ring of zipper-hunting twins, the Head Nurse looked round. The first moment's astonishment gave place almost instantly to disapproval. "Don't shout! Think of the little ones," she said, frowning. "You might decondition … But what are you doing?" He had broken through the ring. "Be careful!" A child was yelling.

"Quick, quick!" He caught her by the sleeve, dragged her after him. "Quick! Something's happened. I've killed her."

By the time they were back at the end of the ward Linda was dead.

The Savage stood for a moment in frozen silence, then fell on his knees beside the bed and, covering his face with his hands, sobbed uncontrollably.

The nurse stood irresolute, looking now at the kneeling figure by the bed (the scandalous exhibition!) and now (poor children!) at the twins who had stopped their hunting of the zipper and were staring from the other end of the ward, staring with all their eyes and nostrils at the shocking scene that was being enacted round Bed 20. Should she speak to him? try to bring him back to a sense of decency? remind him of where he was? of what fatal mischief he might do to these poor innocents? Undoing all their wholesome death-conditioning with this disgusting outcry—as though death were something terrible, as though any one mattered as much as all that! It might give them the most disastrous ideas about the subject, might upset them into reacting in the entirely wrong, the utterly anti-social way.

She stepped forward, she touched him on the shoulder. "Can't you behave?" she said in a low, angry voice. But, looking around, she saw that half a dozen twins were already on their feet and advancing down the ward. The circle was disintegrating. In another moment … No, the risk was too great; the whole Group might be put back six or seven months in its conditioning. She hurried back towards her menaced charges.

"Now, who wants a chocolate éclair?" she asked in a loud, cheerful tone.

"Me!" yelled the entire Bokanovsky Group in chorus. Bed 20 was completely forgotten.

"Oh, God, God, God …" the Savage kept repeating to himself. In the chaos of grief and remorse that filled his mind it was the one articulate word. "God!" he whispered it aloud. "God …"

“Whatever *is* he saying?” said a voice, very near, distinct and shrill through the warblings of the Super-Wurlitzer.

The Savage violently started and, uncovering his face, looked round. Five khaki twins, each with the stump of a long éclair in his right hand, and their identical faces variously smeared with liquid chocolate, were standing in a row, puggily goggling at him.

They met his eyes and simultaneously grinned. One of them pointed with his éclair butt. “Is she dead?” he asked.

The Savage stared at them for a moment in silence. Then in silence he rose to his feet, in silence slowly walked towards the door.

“Is she dead?” repeated the inquisitive twin trotting at his side. The Savage looked down at him and still without speaking pushed him away. The twin fell on the floor and at once began to howl. The Savage did not even look round.

205.

Brave New World: Chapter 15

Aldous Huxley

THE menial staff of the Park Lane Hospital for the Dying consisted of one hundred and sixty-two Deltas divided into two Bokanovsky Groups of eighty-four red headed female and seventy-eight dark dolychocephalic male twins, respectively. At six, when their working day was over, the two Groups assembled in the vestibule of the Hospital and were served by the Deputy Sub-Bursar with their *soma* ration.

From the lift the Savage stepped out into the midst of them. But his mind was elsewhere—with death, with his grief, and his remorse; mechanically, without consciousness of what he was doing, he began to shoulder his way through the crowd.

"Who are you pushing? Where do you think you're going?"

High, low, from a multitude of separate throats, only two voices squeaked or growled. Repeated indefinitely, as though by a train of mirrors, two faces, one a hairless and freckled moon haloed in orange, the other a thin, beaked bird-mask, stubbly with two days' beard, turned angrily towards him. Their words and, in his ribs, the sharp nudging of elbows, broke through his unawareness. He woke once more to external reality, looked round him, knew what he saw—knew it, with a sinking sense of horror and disgust, for the recurrent delirium of his days and nights, the nightmare of swarming indistinguishable sameness. Twins, twins. … Like maggots they had swarmed defilingly over the mystery of Linda's death. Maggots again, but larger, full grown, they now crawled across his grief and his repentance. He halted and, with bewildered and horrified eyes, stared round him at the khaki mob, in the midst of which, overtopping it by a full head, he stood. "How many goodly creatures are there here!" The singing words mocked him derisively. "How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world …"

"*Soma* distribution!" shouted a loud voice. "In good order, please. Hurry up there."

A door had been opened, a table and chair carried into the vestibule. The voice was that of a jaunty young Alpha, who had entered carrying a black iron cash-box. A murmur of satisfaction went up from the expectant twins. They forgot all about the Savage. Their attention was now focused on the black cash-box, which the young man had placed on the table, and was now in process of unlocking. The lid was lifted.

"Oo-oh!" said all the hundred and sixty-two simultaneously, as though they were looking at fireworks.

The young man took out a handful of tiny pill-boxes. "Now," he said peremptorily, "step forward, please. One at a time, and no shoving."

One at a time, with no shoving, the twins stepped forward. First two males, then a female, then another male, then three females, then …

The Savage stood looking on. "O brave new world, O brave new world …" In his mind the singing words seemed to change their tone. They had mocked him through his misery and remorse, mocked him with how hideous a note of cynical derision! Fiendishly laughing, they had insisted on the low squalor, the nauseous ugliness of the nightmare. Now, suddenly, they trumpeted a call to arms. "O brave new world!" Miranda was proclaiming the possibility of loveliness, the possibility of transforming even the nightmare into something fine and noble. "O brave new world!" It was a challenge, a command.

"No shoving there now!" shouted the Deputy Sub-Bursar in a fury. He slammed down the lid of his cash-box. "I shall stop the distribution unless I have good behaviour."

The Deltas muttered, jostled one another a little, and then were still. The threat had been effective. Deprivation of *soma*—appalling thought!

"That's better," said the young man, and reopened his cash-box.

Linda had been a slave, Linda had died; others should live in freedom, and the world be made beautiful. A reparation, a duty. And suddenly it was luminously clear to the Savage what he must do; it was as though a shutter had been opened, a curtain drawn back.

"Now," said the Deputy Sub-Bursar.

Another khaki female stepped forward.

"Stop!" called the Savage in a loud and ringing voice. "Stop!"

He pushed his way to the table; the Deltas stared at him with astonishment.

"Ford!" said the Deputy Sub-Bursar, below his breath. "It's the Savage." He felt scared.

"Listen, I beg of you," cried the Savage earnestly. "Lend me your ears …"[1] He had never spoken in public before, and found it very difficult to express what he wanted to say. "Don't take that horrible stuff. It's poison, it's poison."

"I say, Mr. Savage," said the Deputy Sub-Bursar, smiling propitiatingly. "Would you mind letting me …"

"Poison to soul as well as body."

"Yes, but let me get on with my distribution, won't you? There's a good fellow." With the cautious tenderness of one who strokes a notoriously vicious animal, he patted the Savage's arm. "Just let me …"

"Never!" cried the Savage.

"But look here, old man …"

"Throw it all away, that horrible poison."

The words "Throw it all away" pierced through the enfolding layers of incomprehension to the quick of the Delta's consciousness. An angry murmur went up from the crowd.

"I come to bring you freedom," said the Savage, turning back towards the twins. "I come …"

The Deputy Sub-Bursar heard no more; he had slipped out of the vestibule and was looking up a number in the telephone book.

"Not in his own rooms," Bernard summed up. "Not in mine, not in yours. Not at the Aphroditaeum; not at the Centre or the College. Where can he have got to?"

Helmholtz shrugged his shoulders. They had come back from their work expecting to find the Savage waiting for them at one or other of the usual meeting-places, and there was no sign of the fellow. Which was annoying, as they had meant to nip across to Biarritz in Helmholtz's four-seater sporticopter. They'd be late for dinner if he didn't come soon.

"We'll give him five more minutes," said Helmholtz. "If he doesn't turn up by then, we'll …"

The ringing of the telephone bell interrupted him. He picked up the receiver. "Hullo. Speaking." Then, after a long interval of listening, "Ford in Flivver!" he swore. "I'll come at once."

"What is it?" Bernard asked.

"A fellow I know at the Park Lane Hospital," said Helmholtz. "The Savage is there. Seems to have gone mad. Anyhow, it's urgent. Will you come with me?"

Together they hurried along the corridor to the lifts.

"But do you like being slaves?" the Savage was saying as they entered the Hospital. His face was flushed, his eyes bright with ardour and indignation. "Do you like being babies? Yes, babies. Mewling

1. *Julius Caesar* 3.2.70. Like Mark Antony, John tries here to sway the crowd.

and puking,"[2] he added, exasperated by their bestial stupidity into throwing insults at those he had come to save. The insults bounced off their carapace of thick stupidity; they stared at him with a blank expression of dull and sullen resentment in their eyes. "Yes, puking!" he fairly shouted. Grief and remorse, compassion and duty—all were forgotten now and, as it were, absorbed into an intense overpowering hatred of these less than human monsters. "Don't you want to be free and men? Don't you even understand what manhood and freedom are?" Rage was making him fluent; the words came easily, in a rush. "Don't you?" he repeated, but got no answer to his question. "Very well then," he went on grimly. "I'll teach you; I'll make you be free whether you want to or not." And pushing open a window that looked on to the inner court of the Hospital, he began to throw the little pill-boxes of *soma* tablets in handfuls out into the area.

For a moment the khaki mob was silent, petrified, at the spectacle of this wanton sacrilege, with amazement and horror.

"He's mad," whispered Bernard, staring with wide open eyes. "They'll kill him. They'll …" A great shout suddenly went up from the mob; a wave of movement drove it menacingly towards the Savage. "Ford help him!" said Bernard, and averted his eyes.

"Ford helps those who help themselves." And with a laugh, actually a laugh of exultation, Helmholtz Watson pushed his way through the crowd.

"Free, free!" the Savage shouted, and with one hand continued to throw the *soma* into the area while, with the other, he punched the indistinguishable faces of his assailants. "Free!" And suddenly there was Helmholtz at his side—"Good old Helmholtz!"—also punching—"Men at last!"—and in the interval also throwing the poison out by handfuls through the open window. "Yes, men! men!" and there was no more poison left. He picked up the cash-box and showed them its black emptiness. "You're free!"

Howling, the Deltas charged with a redoubled fury.

Hesitant on the fringes of the battle. "They're done for," said Bernard and, urged by a sudden impulse, ran forward to help them; then thought better of it and halted; then, ashamed, stepped forward again; then again thought better of it, and was standing in an agony of humiliated indecision—thinking that *they* might be killed if he didn't help them, and that *he* might be killed if he did—when (Ford be praised!), goggle-eyed and swine-snouted in their gas-masks, in ran the police.

Bernard dashed to meet them. He waved his arms; and it was action, he was doing something. He shouted "Help!" several times, more and more loudly so as to give himself the illusion of helping. "Help! *Help*! HELP!"

The policemen pushed him out of the way and got on with their work. Three men with spraying machines buckled to their shoulders pumped thick clouds of *soma* vapour into the air. Two more were busy round the portable Synthetic Music Box. Carrying water pistols charged with a powerful anaesthetic, four others had pushed their way into the crowd and were methodically laying out, squirt by squirt, the more ferocious of the fighters.

"Quick, quick!" yelled Bernard. "They'll be killed if you don't hurry. They'll … Oh!" Annoyed by his chatter, one of the policemen had given him a shot from his water pistol. Bernard stood for a second or two wambling unsteadily on legs that seemed to have lost their bones, their tendons, their muscles, to have become mere sticks of jelly, and at last not even jelly—water: he tumbled in a heap on the floor.

Suddenly, from out of the Synthetic Music Box a Voice began to speak. The Voice of Reason, the Voice of Good Feeling. The sound-track roll was unwinding itself in Synthetic Anti-Riot Speech Number Two (Medium Strength). Straight from the depths of a non-existent heart, "My friends, my friends!" said the Voice so pathetically, with a note of such infinitely tender reproach that, behind their gas masks, even the policemen's eyes were momentarily dimmed with tears, "what is the meaning of this? Why aren't

2. Here John recalls Jaques on the seven ages of man in *As You Like It* 3.7.143. Mewling, crying.

you all being happy and good together? Happy and good," the Voice repeated. "At peace, at peace." It trembled, sank into a whisper and momentarily expired. "Oh, I do want you to be happy," it began, with a yearning earnestness. "I do so want you to be good! Please, please be good and …"

Two minutes later the Voice and the *soma* vapour had produced their effect. In tears, the Deltas were kissing and hugging one another—half a dozen twins at a time in a comprehensive embrace. Even Helmholtz and the Savage were almost crying. A fresh supply of pill-boxes was brought in from the Bursary; a new distribution was hastily made and, to the sound of the Voice's richly affectionate, baritone valedictions, the twins dispersed, blubbering as though their hearts would break. "Good-bye, my dearest, dearest friends, Ford keep you! Good-bye, my dearest, dearest friends, Ford keep you. Good-bye my dearest, dearest…'

When the last of the Deltas had gone the policeman switched off the current. The angelic Voice fell silent.

"Will you come quietly?" asked the Sergeant, "or must we anaesthetize?" He pointed his water pistol menacingly.

"Oh, we'll come quietly," the Savage answered, dabbing alternately a cut lip, a scratched neck, and a bitten left hand.

Still keeping his handkerchief to his bleeding nose Helmholtz nodded in confirmation.

Awake and having recovered the use of his legs, Bernard had chosen this moment to move as inconspicuously as he could towards the door.

"Hi, you there," called the Sergeant, and a swine-masked policeman hurried across the room and laid a hand on the young man's shoulder.

Bernard turned with an expression of indignant innocence. Escaping? He hadn't dreamed of such a thing. "Though what on earth you want *me* for," he said to the Sergeant, "I really can't imagine."

"You're a friend of the prisoners, aren't you?"

"Well …" said Bernard, and hesitated. No, he really couldn't deny it. "Why shouldn't I be?" he asked.

"Come on then," said the Sergeant, and led the way towards the door and the waiting police car.

206.

Brave New World: Chapter 16

Aldous Huxley

THE ROOM into which the three were ushered was the Controller's study.

"His fordship will be down in a moment." The Gamma butler left them to themselves.

Helmholtz laughed aloud.

"It's more like a caffeine-solution party than a trial," he said, and let himself fall into the most luxurious of the pneumatic arm-chairs. "Cheer up, Bernard," he added, catching sight of his friend's green unhappy face. But Bernard would not be cheered; without answering, without even looking at Helmholtz, he went and sat down on the most uncomfortable chair in the room, carefully chosen in the obscure hope of somehow deprecating the wrath of the higher powers.

The Savage meanwhile wandered restlessly round the room, peering with a vague superficial inquisitiveness at the books in the shelves, at the sound-track rolls and reading machine bobbins in their numbered pigeon-holes. On the table under the window lay a massive volume bound in limp black leather-surrogate, and stamped with large golden T's. He picked it up and opened it. MY LIFE AND WORK, BY OUR FORD.[1] The book had been published at Detroit by the Society for the Propagation of Fordian Knowledge[2]. Idly he turned the pages, read a sentence here, a paragraph there, and had just come to the conclusion that the book didn't interest him, when the door opened, and the Resident World Controller for Western Europe walked briskly into the room.

Mustapha Mond shook hands with all three of them; but it was to the Savage that he addressed himself. "So you don't much like civilization, Mr. Savage," he said.

The Savage looked at him. He had been prepared to lie, to bluster, to remain sullenly unresponsive; but, reassured by the good-humoured intelligence of the Controller's face, he decided to tell the truth, straightforwardly. "No." He shook his head.

Bernard started and looked horrified. What would the Controller think? To be labelled as the friend of a man who said that he didn't like civilization—said it openly and, of all people, to the Controller—it was terrible. "But, John," he began. A look from Mustapha Mond reduced him to an abject silence.

"Of course," the Savage went on to admit, "there are some very nice things. All that music in the air, for instance …"

"Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments will hum about my ears and sometimes voices."[3]

The Savage's face lit up with a sudden pleasure. "Have you read it too?" he asked. "I thought nobody knew about that book here, in England."

"Almost nobody. I'm one of the very few. It's prohibited, you see. But as I make the laws here, I can also break them. With impunity, Mr. Marx," he added, turning to Bernard. "Which I'm afraid you *can't* do."

1. In his 1926 travel book, *Jesting Pilate*, Huxley tells of his finding a copy of Ford's *My Life and Works* in a ship's library "somewhere between the tropic and the equator" (214). He found it a fascinating book.
2. A play on The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), founded in 1698, and the third oldest publishing house in England.
3. Mond surprises John by quoting Caliban's description of the island's "sounds and sweeet airs that give delight and hurt not" in *The Tempest* 3.2.132-133.

Bernard sank into a yet more hopeless misery.

"But why is it prohibited?" asked the Savage. In the excitement of meeting a man who had read Shakespeare he had momentarily forgotten everything else.

The Controller shrugged his shoulders. "Because it's old; that's the chief reason. We haven't any use for old things here."

"Even when they're beautiful?"

"Particularly when they're beautiful. Beauty's attractive, and we don't want people to be attracted by old things. We want them to like the new ones."

"But the new ones are so stupid and horrible. Those plays, where there's nothing but helicopters flying about and you *feel* the people kissing." He made a grimace. "Goats and monkeys!"[4] Only in Othello's word could he find an adequate vehicle for his contempt and hatred.

"Nice tame animals, anyhow," the Controller murmured parenthetically.

"Why don't you let them see *Othello* instead?"

"I've told you; it's old. Besides, they couldn't understand it."

Yes, that was true. He remembered how Helmholtz had laughed at *Romeo and Juliet*. "Well then," he said, after a pause, "something new that's like *Othello*, and that they could understand."

"That's what we've all been wanting to write," said Helmholtz, breaking a long silence.

"And it's what you never will write," said the Controller. "Because, if it were really like *Othello* nobody could understand it, however new it might be. And if were new, it couldn't possibly be like *Othello*."

"Why not?"

"Yes, why not?" Helmholtz repeated. He too was forgetting the unpleasant realities of the situation. Green with anxiety and apprehension, only Bernard remembered them; the others ignored him. "Why not?"

"Because our world is not the same as Othello's world. You can't make flivvers without steel—and you can't make tragedies without social instability. The world's stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get. They're well off; they're safe; they're never ill; they're not afraid of death; they're blissfully ignorant of passion and old age; they're plagued with no mothers or fathers; they've got no wives, or children, or lovers to feel strongly about; they're so conditioned that they practically can't help behaving as they ought to behave. And if anything should go wrong, there's *soma*. Which you go and chuck out of the window in the name of liberty, Mr. Savage. *Liberty*!" He laughed. "Expecting Deltas to know what liberty is! And now expecting them to understand *Othello*! My good boy!"

The Savage was silent for a little. "All the same," he insisted obstinately, "*Othello*'s good, *Othello*'s better than those feelies."

"Of course it is," the Controller agreed. "But that's the price we have to pay for stability. You've got to choose between happiness and what people used to call high art. We've sacrificed the high art. We have the feelies and the scent organ instead."

"But they don't mean anything."

"They mean themselves; they mean a lot of agreeable sensations to the audience."

"But they're … they're told by an idiot."[5]

The Controller laughed. "You're not being very polite to your friend, Mr. Watson. One of our most distinguished Emotional Engineers …"

4. Othello's words (4.1.263) to describe the imagined adulterous liaison between his wife Desdemona and Michael Cassio, in terms of these notoriously lecherous animals.

5. Macbeth's disillusioned assessment of life as "...a tale/Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,/Signifying nothing." (5.5.25-27).

“But he’s right,” said Helmholtz gloomily. “Because it *is* idiotic. Writing when there’s nothing to say …”

“Precisely. But that requires the most enormous ingenuity. You’re making flivvers out of the absolute minimum of steel—works of art out of practically nothing but pure sensation.”

The Savage shook his head. “It all seems to me quite horrible.”

“Of course it does. Actual happiness always looks pretty squalid in comparison with the over-compensations for misery. And, of course, stability isn’t nearly so spectacular as instability. And being contented has none of the glamour of a good fight against misfortune, none of the picturesqueness of a struggle with temptation, or a fatal overthrow by passion or doubt. Happiness is never grand.”

“I suppose not,” said the Savage after a silence. “But need it be quite so bad as those twins?” He passed his hand over his eyes as though he were trying to wipe away the remembered image of those long rows of identical midgets at the assembling tables, those queued-up twin-herds at the entrance to the Brentford monorail station, those human maggots swarming round Linda’s bed of death, the endlessly repeated face of his assailants. He looked at his bandaged left hand and shuddered. “Horrible!”

“But how useful! I see you don’t like our Bokanovsky Groups; but, I assure you, they’re the foundation on which everything else is built. They’re the gyroscope that stabilizes the rocket plane of state on its unswerving course.” The deep voice thrillingly vibrated; the gesticulating hand implied all space and the onrush of the irresistible machine. Mustapha Mond’s oratory was almost up to synthetic standards.

“I was wondering,” said the Savage, “why you had them at all—seeing that you can get whatever you want out of those bottles. Why don’t you make everybody an Alpha Double Plus while you’re about it?”

Mustapha Mond laughed. “Because we have no wish to have our throats cut,” he answered. “We believe in happiness and stability. A society of Alphas couldn’t fail to be unstable and miserable. Imagine a factory staffed by Alphas—that is to say by separate and unrelated individuals of good heredity and conditioned so as to be capable (within limits) of making a free choice and assuming responsibilities. Imagine it!” he repeated.

The Savage tried to imagine it, not very successfully.

“It’s an absurdity. An Alpha-decanted, Alpha-conditioned man would go mad if he had to do Epsilon Semi-Moron work—go mad, or start smashing things up. Alphas can be completely socialized—but only on condition that you make them do Alpha work. Only an Epsilon can be expected to make Epsilon sacrifices, for the good reason that for him they aren’t sacrifices; they’re the line of least resistance. His conditioning has laid down rails along which he’s got to run. He can’t help himself; he’s foredoomed. Even after decanting, he’s still inside a bottle—an invisible bottle of infantile and embryonic fixations. Each one of us, of course,” the Controller meditatively continued, “goes through life inside a bottle. But if we happen to be Alphas, our bottles are, relatively speaking, enormous. We should suffer acutely if we were confined in a narrower space. You cannot pour upper-caste champagne-surrogate into lower-caste bottles. It’s obvious theoretically. But it has also been proved in actual practice. The result of the Cyprus experiment was convincing.”

“What was that?” asked the Savage.

Mustapha Mond smiled. “Well, you can call it an experiment in rebottling if you like. It began in A.F. 473. The Controllers had the island of Cyprus cleared of all its existing inhabitants and re-colonized with a specially prepared batch of twenty-two thousand Alphas. All agricultural and industrial equipment was handed over to them and they were left to manage their own affairs. The result exactly fulfilled all the theoretical predictions. The land wasn’t properly worked; there were strikes in all the factories; the laws were set at naught, orders disobeyed; all the people detailed for a spell of low-grade work were perpetually intriguing for high-grade jobs, and all the people with high-grade jobs were counter-intriguing at all costs to stay where they were. Within six years they were having a first-class civil war.

When nineteen out of the twenty-two thousand had been killed, the survivors unanimously petitioned the World Controllers to resume the government of the island. Which they did. And that was the end of the only society of Alphas that the world has ever seen."

The Savage sighed, profoundly.

"The optimum population," said Mustapha Mond, "is modelled on the iceberg—eight-ninths below the water line, one-ninth above."

"And they're happy below the water line?"

"Happier than above it. Happier than your friend here, for example." He pointed.

"In spite of that awful work?"

"Awful? *They* don't find it so. On the contrary, they like it. It's light, it's childishly simple. No strain on the mind or the muscles. Seven and a half hours of mild, unexhausting labour, and then the *soma* ration and games and unrestricted copulation and the feelies. What more can they ask for? True," he added, "they might ask for shorter hours. And of course we could give them shorter hours. Technically, it would be perfectly simple to reduce all lower-caste working hours to three or four a day. But would they be any the happier for that? No, they wouldn't. The experiment was tried, more than a century and a half ago. The whole of Ireland was put on to the four-hour day. What was the result? Unrest and a large increase in the consumption of *soma*; that was all. Those three and a half hours of extra leisure were so far from being a source of happiness, that people felt constrained to take a holiday from them. The Inventions Office is stuffed with plans for labour-saving processes. Thousands of them." Mustapha Mond made a lavish gesture. "And why don't we put them into execution? For the sake of the labourers; it would be sheer cruelty to afflict them with excessive leisure. It's the same with agriculture. We could synthesize every morsel of food, if we wanted to. But we don't. We prefer to keep a third of the population on the land. For their own sakes—because it takes *longer* to get food out of the land than out of a factory. Besides, we have our stability to think of. We don't want to change. Every change is a menace to stability. That's another reason why we're so chary of applying new inventions. Every discovery in pure science is potentially subversive; even science must sometimes be treated as a possible enemy. Yes, even science."

Science? The Savage frowned. He knew the word. But what it exactly signified he could not say. Shakespeare and the old men of the pueblo had never mentioned science, and from Linda he had only gathered the vaguest hints: science was something you made helicopters with, some thing that caused you to laugh at the Corn Dances, something that prevented you from being wrinkled and losing your teeth. He made a desperate effort to take the Controller's meaning.

"Yes," Mustapha Mond was saying, "that's another item in the cost of stability. It isn't only art that's incompatible with happiness; it's also science. Science is dangerous; we have to keep it most carefully chained and muzzled."

"What?" said Helmholtz, in astonishment. "But we're always saying that science is everything. It's a hypnopaedic platitude."

"Three times a week between thirteen and seventeen," put in Bernard.

"And all the science propaganda we do at the College …"

"Yes; but what sort of science?" asked Mustapha Mond sarcastically. "You've had no scientific training, so you can't judge. I was a pretty good physicist in my time. Too good—good enough to realize that all our science is just a cookery book, with an orthodox theory of cooking that nobody's allowed to question, and a list of recipes that mustn't be added to except by special permission from the head cook. I'm the head cook now. But I was an inquisitive young scullion once. I started doing a bit of cooking on my own. Unorthodox cooking, illicit cooking. A bit of real science, in fact." He was silent.

"What happened?" asked Helmholtz Watson.

The Controller sighed. "Very nearly what's going to happen to you young men. I was on the point of being sent to an island."

The words galvanized Bernard into violent and unseemly activity. "Send *me* to an island?" He jumped up, ran across the room, and stood gesticulating in front of the Controller. "You can't send *me*. I haven't done anything. It was the others. I swear it was the others." He pointed accusingly to Helmholtz and the Savage. "Oh, please don't send me to Iceland. I promise I'll do what I ought to do. Give me another chance. Please give me another chance." The tears began to flow. "I tell you, it's their fault," he sobbed. "And not to Iceland. Oh please, your fordship, please …" And in a paroxysm of abjection he threw himself on his knees before the Controller. Mustapha Mond tried to make him get up; but Bernard persisted in his grovelling; the stream of words poured out inexhaustibly. In the end the Controller had to ring for his fourth secretary.

"Bring three men," he ordered, "and take Mr. Marx into a bedroom. Give him a good *soma* vaporization and then put him to bed and leave him."

The fourth secretary went out and returned with three green-uniformed twin footmen. Still shouting and sobbing. Bernard was carried out.

"One would think he was going to have his throat cut," said the Controller, as the door closed. "Whereas, if he had the smallest sense, he'd understand that his punishment is really a reward. He's being sent to an island. That's to say, he's being sent to a place where he'll meet the most interesting set of men and women to be found anywhere in the world. All the people who, for one reason or another, have got too self-consciously individual to fit into community-life. All the people who aren't satisfied with orthodoxy, who've got independent ideas of their own. Every one, in a word, who's any one. I almost envy you, Mr. Watson."

Helmholtz laughed. "Then why aren't you on an island yourself?"

"Because, finally, I preferred this," the Controller answered. "I was given the choice: to be sent to an island, where I could have got on with my pure science, or to be taken on to the Controllers' Council with the prospect of succeeding in due course to an actual Controllership. I chose this and let the science go." After a little silence, "Sometimes," he added, "I rather regret the science. Happiness is a hard master—particularly other people's happiness. A much harder master, if one isn't conditioned to accept it unquestioningly, than truth." He sighed, fell silent again, then continued in a brisker tone, "Well, duty's duty. One can't consult one's own preference. I'm interested in truth, I like science. But truth's a menace, science is a public danger. As dangerous as it's been beneficent. It has given us the stablest equilibrium in history. China's was hopelessly insecure by comparison; even the primitive matriarchies weren't steadier than we are. Thanks, I repeat, to science. But we can't allow science to undo its own good work. That's why we so carefully limit the scope of its researches—that's why I almost got sent to an island. We don't allow it to deal with any but the most immediate problems of the moment. All other enquiries are most sedulously discouraged. It's curious," he went on after a little pause, "to read what people in the time of Our Ford used to write about scientific progress. They seemed to have imagined that it could be allowed to go on indefinitely, regardless of everything else. Knowledge was the highest good, truth the supreme value; all the rest was secondary and subordinate. True, ideas were beginning to change even then. Our Ford himself did a great deal to shift the emphasis from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness. Mass production demanded the shift. Universal happiness keeps the wheels steadily turning; truth and beauty can't. And, of course, whenever the masses seized political power, then it was happiness rather than truth and beauty that mattered. Still, in spite of everytung, unrestricted scientific research was still permitted. People still went on talking about truth and beauty as though they were the sovereign goods. Right up to the time of the Nine Years' War. *That* made them change their tune all right. What's the point of truth or beauty or knowledge when the anthrax bombs are popping all around you? That was when science first began to be controlled—after the Nine Years' War. People were ready to have even their appetites

controlled then. Anything for a quiet life. We've gone on controlling ever since. It hasn't been very good for truth, of course. But it's been very good for happiness. One can't have something for nothing. Happiness has got to be paid for. You're paying for it, Mr. Watson-paying because you happen to be too much interested in beauty. I was too much interested in truth; I paid too."

"But *you* didn't go to an island," said the Savage, breaking a long silence.

The Controller smiled. "That's how I paid. By choosing to serve happiness. Other people's—not mine. It's lucky," he added, after a pause, "that there are such a lot of islands in the world. I don't know what we should do without them. Put you all in the lethal chamber, I suppose. By the way, Mr. Watson, would you like a tropical climate? The Marquesas, for example; or Samoa? Or something rather more bracing?"

Helmholtz rose from his pneumatic chair. "I should like a thoroughly bad climate," he answered. "I believe one would write better if the climate were bad. If there were a lot of wind and storms, for example …"

The Controller nodded his approbation. "I like your spirit, Mr. Watson. I like it very much indeed. As much as I officially disapprove of it." He smiled. "What about the Falkland Islands?"

"Yes, I think that will do," Helmholtz answered. "And now, if you don't mind, I'll go and see how poor Bernard's getting on."

207.

Brave New World: Chapter 17

Aldous Huxley

ART, SCIENCE—you seem to have paid a fairly high price for your happiness," said the Savage, when they were alone. "Anything else?"

"Well, religion, of course," replied the Controller. "There used to be something called God—before the Nine Years' War. But I was forgetting; you know all about God, I suppose."

"Well …" The Savage hesitated. He would have liked to say something about solitude, about night, about the mesa lying pale under the moon, about the precipice, the plunge into shadowy darkness, about death. He would have liked to speak; but there were no words. Not even in Shakespeare.

The Controller, meanwhile, had crossed to the other side of the room and was unlocking a large safe set into the wall between the bookshelves. The heavy door swung open. Rummaging in the darkness within, "It's a subject," he said, "that has always had a great interest for me." He pulled out a thick black volume. "You've never read this, for example."

The Savage took it. "*The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments,*' he read aloud from the title-page.

"Nor this." It was a small book and had lost its cover.

"*The Imitation of Christ.*"

"Nor this." He handed out another volume.

"*The Varieties of Religious Experience*. By William James."

"And I've got plenty more," Mustapha Mond continued, resuming his seat. "A whole collection of pornographic old books. God in the safe and Ford on the shelves." He pointed with a laugh to his avowed library—to the shelves of books, the rack full of reading-machine bobbins and sound-track rolls.

"But if you know about God, why don't you tell them?" asked the Savage indignantly. "Why don't you give them these books about God?" "For the same reason as we don't give them *Othello*: they're old; they're about God hundreds of years ago. Not about God now."

"But God doesn't change."

"Men do, though."

"What difference does that make?"

"All the difference in the world," said Mustapha Mond. He got up again and walked to the safe. "There was a man called Cardinal Newman," he said. "A cardinal," he exclaimed parenthetically, "was a kind of Arch-Community-Songster."

'"I Pandulph, of fair Milan, cardinal.[1] I've read about them in Shakespeare."

"Of course you have. Well, as I was saying, there was a man called Cardinal Newman. Ah, here's the book." He pulled it out. "And while I'm about it I'll take this one too. It's by a man called Maine de Biran. He was a philosopher, if you know what that was."

"A man who dreams of fewer things than there are in heaven and earth,"[2] said the Savage promptly.

"Quite so. I'll read you one of the things he *did* dream of in a moment. Meanwhile, listen to what

1. King John 3.1.64.
2. See *Hamlet* 1.5.168-9: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,/Than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

this old Arch-Community-Songster said." He opened the book at the place marked by a slip of paper and began to read. '"We are not our own any more than what we possess is our own. We did not make ourselves, we cannot be supreme over ourselves. We are not our own masters. We are God's property. Is it not our happiness thus to view the matter? Is it any happiness or any comfort, to consider that we *are* our own? It may be thought so by the young and prosperous. These may think it a great thing to have everything, as they suppose, their own way—to depend on no one—to have to think of nothing out of sight, to be without the irksomeness of continual acknowledgment, continual prayer, continual reference of what they do to the will of another. But as time goes on, they, as all men, will find that independence was not made for man—that it is an unnatural state—will do for a while, but will not carry us on safely to the end …'"[3] Mustapha Mond paused, put down the first book and, picking up the other, turned over the pages. "Take this, for example," he said, and in his deep voice once more began to read: "'A man grows old; he feels in himself that radical sense of weakness, of listlessness, of discomfort, which accompanies the advance of age; and, feeling thus, imagines himself merely sick, lulling his fears with the notion that this distressing condition is due to some particular cause, from which, as from an illness, he hopes to recover. Vain imaginings! That sickness is old age; and a horrible disease it is. They say that it is the fear of death and of what comes after death that makes men turn to religion as they advance in years. But my own experience has given me the conviction that, quite apart from any such terrors or imaginings, the religious sentiment tends to develop as we grow older; to develop because, as the passions grow calm, as the fancy and sensibilities are less excited and less excitable, our reason becomes less troubled in its working, less obscured by the images, desires and distractions, in which it used to be absorbed; whereupon God emerges as from behind a cloud; our soul feels, sees, turns towards the source of all light; turns naturally and inevitably; for now that all that gave to the world of sensations its life and charms has begun to leak away from us, now that phenomenal existence is no more bolstered up by impressions from within or from without, we feel the need to lean on something that abides, something that will never play us false—a reality, an absolute and everlasting truth. Yes, we inevitably turn to God; for this religious sentiment is of its nature so pure, so delightful to the soul that experiences it, that it makes up to us for all our other losses.'" Mustapha Mond shut the book and leaned back in his chair. "One of the numerous things in heaven and earth that these philosophers didn't dream about was this" (he waved his hand), "us, the modern world. 'You can only be independent of God while you've got youth and prosperity; independence won't take you safely to the end.' Well, we've now got youth and prosperity right up to the end. What follows? Evidently, that we can be independent of God. 'The religious sentiment will compensate us for all our losses.' But there aren't any losses for us to compensate; religious sentiment is superfluous. And why should we go hunting for a substitute for youthful desires, when youthful desires never fail? A substitute for distractions, when we go on enjoying all the old fooleries to the very last? What need have we of repose when our minds and bodies continue to delight in activity? of consolation, when we have *soma*? of something immovable, when there is the social order?"

"Then you think there is no God?" "No, I think there quite probably is one." "Then why? …"

Mustapha Mond checked him. "But he manifests himself in different ways to different men. In pre-modern times he manifested himself as the being that's described in these books. Now …" "How does he manifest himself now?" asked the Savage. "Well, he manifests himself as an absence; as though he weren't there at all."

"That's your fault."

"Call it the fault of civilization. God isn't compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness. You must make your choice. Our civilization has chosen machinery and medicine

3. Newman, Sermons, "Remembrance of Past Mercies."

and happiness. That's why I have to keep these books locked up in the safe. They're smut. People would be shocked it …"

The Savage interrupted him. "But isn't it *natural* to feel there's a God?" "You might as well ask if it's natural to do up one's trousers with zippers," said the Controller sarcastically. "You remind me of another of those old fellows called Bradley[4] He defined philosophy as the finding of bad reasons for what one believes by instinct. As if one believed anything by instinct! One believes things because one has been conditioned to believe them. Finding bad reasons for what one believes for other bad reasons—that's philosophy. People believe in God because they've been conditioned to.

"But all the same," insisted the Savage, "it is natural to believe in God when you're alone—quite alone, in the night, thinking about death …" "But people never are alone now," said Mustapha Mond. "We make them hate solitude; and we arrange their lives so that it's almost impossible for them ever to have it."

The Savage nodded gloomily. At Malpais he had suffered because they had shut him out from the communal activities of the pueblo, in civilized London he was suffering because he could never escape from those communal activities, never be quietly alone.

"Do you remember that bit in *King Lear*?" said the Savage at last. '"The gods are just and of our pleasant vices make instruments to plague us; the dark and vicious place where thee he got cost him his eyes,' and Edmund answers—you remember, he's wounded, he's dying—'Thou hast spoken right; 'tis true. The wheel has come full circle; I am here.'[5] What about that now? Doesn't there seem to be a God managing things, punishing, rewarding?"

"Well, does there?" questioned the Controller in his turn. "You can indulge in any number of pleasant vices with a freemartin and run no risks of having your eyes put out by your son's mistress. 'The wheel has come full circle; I am here.' But where would Edmund be nowadays? Sitting in a pneumatic chair, with his arm round a girl's waist, sucking away at his sex-hormone chewing-gum and looking at the feelies. The gods are just. No doubt. But their code of law is dictated, in the last resort, by the people who organize society; Providence takes its cue from men."

"Are you sure?" asked the Savage. "Are you quite sure that the Edmund in that pneumatic chair hasn't been just as heavily punished as the Edmund who's wounded and bleeding to death? The gods are just. Haven't they used his pleasant vices as an instrument to degrade him?"

"Degrade him from what position? As a happy, hard-working, goods-consuming citizen he's perfect. Of course, if you choose some other standard than ours, then perhaps you might say he was degraded. But you've got to stick to one set of postulates. You can't play Electromagnetic Golf according to the rules of Centrifugal Bumble-puppy."

"But value dwells not in particular will," said the Savage. "It holds his estimate and dignity as well wherein 'tis precious of itself as in the prizer."[6]

"Come, come," protested Mustapha Mond, "that's going rather far, isn't it?"

"If you allowed yourselves to think of God, you wouldn't allow yourselves to be degraded by pleasant vices. You'd have a reason for bearing things patiently, for doing things with courage. I've seen it with the Indians."

"I'm sure you have," said Mustapha Mond. "But then we aren't Indians. There isn't any need for a civilized man to bear anything that's seriously unpleasant. And as for doing things—Ford forbid that he should get the idea into his head. It would upset the whole social order if men started doing things on their own."

4. Frances Herbert Bradley (1846-1924). *Appearance and Reality: a metaphysical essay*: "Metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct, but to find these reasons is no less an instinct." (4).
5. *King Lear* 5.3. 169-173.
6. *Troilus and Cressida* 2.2.53-55.

"What about self-denial, then? If you had a God, you'd have a reason for self-denial."

"But industrial civilization is only possible when there's no self-denial. Self-indulgence up to the very limits imposed by hygiene and economics. Otherwise the wheels stop turning."

"You'd have a reason for chastity!" said the Savage, blushing a little as he spoke the words.

"But chastity means passion, chastity means neurasthenia. And passion and neurasthenia mean instability. And instability means the end of civilization. You can't have a lasting civilization without plenty of pleasant vices."

"But God's the reason for everything noble and fine and heroic. If you had a God …"

"My dear young friend," said Mustapha Mond, "civilization has absolutely no need of nobility or heroism. These things are symptoms of political inefficiency. In a properly organized society like ours, nobody has any opportunities for being noble or heroic. Conditions have got to be thoroughly unstable before the occasion can arise. Where there are wars, where there are divided allegiances, where there are temptations to be resisted, objects of love to be fought for or defended—there, obviously, nobility and heroism have some sense. But there aren't any wars nowadays. The greatest care is taken to prevent you from loving any one too much. There's no such thing as a divided allegiance; you're so conditioned that you can't help doing what you ought to do. And what you ought to do is on the whole so pleasant, so many of the natural impulses are allowed free play, that there really aren't any temptations to resist. And if ever, by some unlucky chance, anything unpleasant should somehow happen, why, there's always *soma* to give you a holiday from the facts. And there's always *soma* to calm your anger, to reconcile you to your enemies, to make you patient and long-suffering. In the past you could only accomplish these things by making a great effort and after years of hard moral training. Now, you swallow two or three half-gramme tablets, and there you are. Anybody can be virtuous now. You can carry at least half your mortality about in a bottle. Christianity without tears—that's what *soma* is."

"But the tears are necessary. Don't you remember what Othello said? 'If after every tempest came such calms, may the winds blow till they have wakened death.' [7] There's a story one of the old Indians used to tell us, about the Girl of Mataski.[8]. The young men who wanted to marry her had to do a morning's hoeing in her garden. It seemed easy; but there were flies and mosquitoes, magic ones. Most of the young men simply couldn't stand the biting and stinging. But the one that could—he got the girl."

"Charming! But in civilized countries," said the Controller, "you can have girls without hoeing for them, and there aren't any flies or mosquitoes to sting you. We got rid of them all centuries ago."

The Savage nodded, frowning. "You got rid of them. Yes, that's just like you. Getting rid of everything unpleasant instead of learning to put up with it. Whether 'tis better in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them … But you don't do either. Neither suffer nor oppose. You just abolish the slings and arrows. It's too easy."

He was suddenly silent, thinking of his mother. In her room on the thirty-seventh floor, Linda had floated in a sea of singing lights and perfumed caresses—floated away, out of space, out of time, out of the prison of her memories, her habits, her aged and bloated body. And Tomakin, ex-Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning, Tomakin was still on holiday—on holiday from humiliation and pain, in a world where he could not hear those words, that derisive laughter, could not see that hideous face, feel those moist and flabby arms round his neck, in a beautiful world …

"What you need," the Savage went on, "is something with tears for a change. Nothing costs enough here."

("Twelve and a half million dollars," Henry Foster had protested when the Savage told him that. "Twelve and a half million—that's what the new Conditioning Centre cost. Not a cent less.") "Exposing

7. *Othello* 2.1.183-84.

8. Huxley read this account in Frank Hamilton Cushing, *Zuñi Folk Tales* (1901) http://www.sacred-texts.com/nam/zuni/zft/zft03.htm

what is mortal and unsure to all that fortune, death and danger dare, even for an eggshell. Isn't there something in that?" he asked, looking up at Mustapha Mond. "Quite apart from God—though of course God would be a reason for it. Isn't there something in living dangerously?"

"There's a great deal in it," the Controller replied. "Men and women must have their adrenals stimulated from time to time." "What?" questioned the Savage, uncomprehending. "It's one of the conditions of perfect health. That's why we've made the V.P.S. treatments compulsory." "V.P.S.?"

"Violent Passion Surrogate. Regularly once a month. We flood the whole system with adrenalin. It's the complete physiological equivalent of fear and rage. All the tonic effects of murdering Desdemona and being murdered by Othello, without any of the inconveniences."

"But I like the inconveniences."

"We don't," said the Controller. "We prefer to do things comfortably."

"But I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin."

"In fact," said Mustapha Mond, "you're claiming the right to be unhappy."

"All right then," said the Savage defiantly, "I'm claiming the right to be unhappy."

"Not to mention the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen to-morrow; the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind."

There was a long silence.

"I claim them all," said the Savage at last.

Mustapha Mond shrugged his shoulders. "You're welcome," he said.

208.

Brave New World: Chapter 18

Aldous Huxley

THE DOOR was ajar; they entered.

"John!"

From the bathroom came an unpleasant and characteristic sound.

"Is there anything the matter?" Helmholtz called.

There was no answer. The unpleasant sound was repeated, twice; there was silence. Then, with a click the bathroom door opened and, very pale, the Savage emerged.

"I say," Helmholtz exclaimed solicitously, "you *do* look ill, John!"

"Did you eat something that didn't agree with you?" asked Bernard.

The Savage nodded. "I ate civilization."

"What?"

"It poisoned me; I was defiled. And then," he added, in a lower tone, "I ate my own wickedness."

"Yes, but what exactly? … I mean, just now you were …"

"Now I am purified," said the Savage. "I drank some mustard and warm water."

The others stared at him in astonishment. "Do you mean to say that you were doing it on purpose?" asked Bernard.

"That's how the Indians always purify themselves." He sat down and, sighing, passed his hand across his forehead. "I shall rest for a few minutes," he said. "I'm rather tired."

"Well, I'm not surprised," said Helmholtz. After a silence, "We've come to say good-bye," he went on in another tone. "We're off to-morrow morning."

"Yes, we're off to-morrow," said Bernard on whose face the Savage remarked a new expression of determined resignation. "And by the way, John," he continued, leaning forward in his chair and laying a hand on the Savage's knee, "I want to say how sorry I am about everything that happened yesterday." He blushed. "How ashamed," he went on, in spite of the unsteadiness of his voice, "how really …"

The Savage cut him short and, taking his hand, affectionately pressed it.

"Helmholtz was wonderful to me," Bernard resumed, after a little pause. "If it hadn't been for him, I should …"

"Now, now," Helmholtz protested.

There was a silence. In spite of their sadness—because of it, even; for their sadness was the symptom of their love for one another—the three young men were happy.

"I went to see the Controller this morning," said the Savage at last.

"What for?"

"To ask if I mightn't go to the islands with you."

"And what did he say?" asked Helmholtz eagerly.

The Savage shook his head. "He wouldn't let me."

"Why not?"

"He said he wanted to go on with the experiment. But I'm damned," the Savage added, with sudden

fury, "I'm damned if I'll go on being experimented with. Not for all the Controllers in the world. *I* shall go away to-morrow too."

"But where?" the others asked in unison.

The Savage shrugged his shoulders. "Anywhere. I don't care. So long as I can be alone."

From Guildford the down-line followed the Wey valley to Godalming, then, over Milford and Witley, proceeded to Haslemere and on through Petersfield towards Portsmouth. Roughly parallel to it, the upline passed over Worplesden, Tongham, Puttenham, Elstead and Grayshott. Between the Hog's Back and Hindhead there were points where the two lines were not more than six or seven kilometres apart. The distance was too small for careless flyers—particularly at night and when they had taken half a gramme too much. There had been accidents. Serious ones. It had been decided to deflect the upline a few kilometres to the west. Between Grayshott and Tongham four abandoned air-lighthouses marked the course of the old Portsmouth-to-London road. The skies above them were silent and deserted. It was over Selborne, Bordon and Farnham that the helicopters now ceaselessly hummed and roared.

The Savage had chosen as his hermitage the old light-house which stood on the crest of the hill between Puttenham and Elstead. The building was of ferro-concrete and in excellent condition—almost too comfortable the Savage had thought when he first explored the place, almost too civilizedly luxurious. He pacified his conscience by promising himself a compensatingly harder self-discipline, purifications the more complete and thorough. His first night in the hermitage was, deliberately, a sleepless one. He spent the hours on his knees praying, now to that Heaven from which the guilty Claudius had begged forgiveness, now in Zuñi to Awonawilona, now to Jesus and Pookong, now to his own guardian animal, the eagle. From time to time he stretched out his arms as though he were on the Cross, and held them thus through long minutes of an ache that gradually increased till it became a tremulous and excruciating agony; held them, in voluntary crucifixion, while he repeated, through clenched teeth (the sweat, meanwhile, pouring down his face), "Oh, forgive me! Oh, make me pure! Oh, help me to be good!" again and again, till he was on the point of fainting from the pain.

When morning came, he felt he had earned the right to inhabit the lighthouse; yet, even though there still was glass in most of the windows, even though the view from the platform was so fine. For the very reason why he had chosen the lighthouse had become almost instantly a reason for going somewhere else. He had decided to live there because the view was so beautiful, because, from his vantage point, he seemed to be looking out on to the incarnation of a divine being. But who was he to be pampered with the daily and hourly sight of loveliness? Who was he to be living in the visible presence of God? All he deserved to live in was some filthy sty, some blind hole in the ground. Stiff and still aching after his long night of pain, but for that very reason inwardly reassured, he climbed up to the platform of his tower, he looked out over the bright sunrise world which he had regained the right to inhabit. On the north the view was bounded by the long chalk ridge of the Hog's Back, from behind whose eastern extremity rose the towers of the seven skyscrapers which constituted Guildford. Seeing them, the Savage made a grimace; but he was to become reconciled to them in course of time; for at night they twinkled gaily with geometrical constellations, or else, flood-lighted, pointed their luminous fingers (with a gesture whose significance nobody in England but the Savage now understood) solemnly towards the plumbless mysteries of heaven.

In the valley which separated the Hog's Back from the sandy hill on which the lighthouse stood, Puttenham was a modest little village nine stories high, with silos, a poultry farm, and a small vitamin-D factory. On the other side of the lighthouse, towards the South, the ground fell away in long slopes of heather to a chain of ponds.

Beyond them, above the intervening woods, rose the fourteen-story tower of Elstead. Dim in the hazy English air, Hindhead and Selborne invited the eye into a blue romantic distance. But it was not alone

the distance that had attracted the Savage to his lighthouse; the near was as seductive as the far. The woods, the open stretches of heather and yellow gorse, the clumps of Scotch firs, the shining ponds with their overhanging birch trees, their water lilies, their beds of rushes—these were beautiful and, to an eye accustomed to the aridities of the American desert, astonishing. And then the solitude! Whole days passed during which he never saw a human being. The lighthouse was only a quarter of an hour's flight from the Charing-T Tower; but the hills of Malpais were hardly more deserted than this Surrey heath. The crowds that daily left London, left it only to play Electro-magnetic Golf or Tennis. Puttenham possessed no links; the nearest Riemann-surfaces were at Guildford. Flowers and a landscape were the only attractions here. And so, as there was no good reason for coming, nobody came. During the first days the Savage lived alone and undisturbed.

Of the money which, on his first arrival, John had received for his personal expenses, most had been spent on his equipment. Before leaving London he had bought four viscose-woollen blankets, rope and string, nails, glue, a few tools, matches (though he intended in due course to make a fire drill), some pots and pans, two dozen packets of seeds, and ten kilogrammes of wheat flour. "No, *not* synthetic starch and cotton-waste flour-substitute," he had insisted. "Even though it is more nourishing." But when it came to pan-glandular biscuits and vitaminized beef-surrogate, he had not been able to resist the shopman's persuasion. Looking at the tins now, he bitterly reproached himself for his weakness. Loathesome civilized stuff! He had made up his mind that he would never eat it, even if he were starving. "That'll teach them," he thought vindictively. It would also teach him.

He counted his money. The little that remained would be enough, he hoped, to tide him over the winter. By next spring, his garden would be producing enough to make him independent of the outside world. Meanwhile, there would always be game. He had seen plenty of rabbits, and there were waterfowl on the ponds. He set to work at once to make a bow and arrows.

There were ash trees near the lighthouse and, for arrow shafts, a whole copse full of beautifully straight hazel saplings. He began by felling a young ash, cut out six feet of unbranched stem, stripped off the bark and, paring by paring, shaved away the white wood, as old Mit-sima had taught him, until he had a stave of his own height, stiff at the thickened centre, lively and quick at the slender tips. The work gave him an intense pleasure. After those weeks of idleness in London, with nothing to do, whenever he wanted anything, but to press a switch or turn a handle, it was pure delight to be doing something that demanded skill and patience.

He had almost finished whittling the stave into shape, when he realized with a start that he was singing—*singing*! It was as though, stumbling upon himself from the outside, he had suddenly caught himself out, taken himself flagrantly at fault. Guiltily he blushed. After all, it was not to sing and enjoy himself that he had come here. It was to escape further contamination by the filth of civilized life; it was to be purified and made good; it was actively to make amends. He realized to his dismay that, absorbed in the whittling of his bow, he had forgotten what he had sworn to himself he would constantly remember—poor Linda, and his own murderous unkindness to her, and those loathsome twins, swarming like lice across the mystery of her death, insulting, with their presence, not merely his own grief and repentance, but the very gods themselves. He had sworn to remember, he had sworn unceasingly to make amends. And there was he, sitting happily over his bow-stave, singing, actually singing. …

He went indoors, opened the box of mustard, and put some water to boil on the fire.

Half an hour later, three Delta-Minus landworkers from one of the Puttenham Bokanovsky Groups happened to be driving to Elstead and, at the top of the hill, were astonished to see a young man standing outside the abandoned lighthouse stripped to the waist and hitting himself with a whip of knotted cords. His back was horizontally streaked with crimson, and from weal to weal ran thin trickles of blood. The driver of the lorry pulled up at the side of the road and, with his two companions, stared open-mouthed

at the extraordinary spectacle. One, two three—they counted the strokes. After the eighth, the young man interrupted his self-punishment to run to the wood's edge and there be violently sick. When he had finished, he picked up the whip and began hitting himself again. Nine, ten, eleven, twelve …

"Ford!" whispered the driver. And his twins were of the same opinion.

"Fordey!" they said.

Three days later, like turkey buzzards settling on a corpse, the reporters came.

Dried and hardened over a slow fire of green wood, the bow was ready. The Savage was busy on his arrows. Thirty hazel sticks had been whittled and dried, tipped with sharp nails, carefully nocked. He had made a raid one night on the Puttenham poultry farm, and now had feathers enough to equip a whole armoury. It was at work upon the feathering of his shafts that the first of the reporters found him. Noiseless on his pneumatic shoes, the man came up behind him.

"Good-morning, Mr. Savage," he said. "I am the representative of *The Hourly Radio*."

Startled as though by the bite of a snake, the Savage sprang to his feet, scattering arrows, feathers, glue-pot and brush in all directions.

"I beg your pardon," said the reporter, with genuine compunction. "I had no intention …" He touched his hat—the aluminum stove-pipe hat in which he carried his wireless receiver and transmitter. "Excuse my not taking it off," he said. "It's a bit heavy. Well, as I was saying, I am the representative of *The Hourly* …"

"What do you want?" asked the Savage, scowling. The reporter returned his most ingratiating smile.

"Well, of course, our readers would be profoundly interested …" He put his head on one side, his smile became almost coquettish. "Just a few words from you, Mr. Savage." And rapidly, with a series of ritual gestures, he uncoiled two wires connected to the portable battery buckled round his waist; plugged them simultaneously into the sides of his aluminum hat; touched a spring on the crown—and antennae shot up into the air; touched another spring on the peak of the brim–and, like a jack-in-the-box, out jumped a microphone and hung there, quivering, six inches in front of his nose; pulled down a pair of receivers over his ears; pressed a switch on the left side of the hat—and from within came a faint waspy buzzing; turned a knob on the right—and the buzzing was interrupted by a stethoscopic wheeze and cackle, by hiccoughs and sudden squeaks. "Hullo," he said to the microphone, "hullo, hullo …" A bell suddenly rang inside his hat. "Is that you, Edzel? Primo Mellon[1] speaking. Yes, I've got hold of him. Mr. Savage will now take the microphone and say a few words. Won't you, Mr. Savage?" He looked up at the Savage with another of those winning smiles of his. "Just tell our readers why you came here. What made you leave London (hold on, Edzel!) so very suddenly. And, of course, that whip." (The Savage started. How did they know about the whip?) "We're all crazy to know about the whip. And then something about Civilization. You know the sort of stuff. 'What I think of the Civilized Girl.' Just a few words, a very few …"

The Savage obeyed with a disconcerting literalness. Five words he uttered and no more—five words, the same as those he had said to Bernard about the Arch-Community-Songster of Canterbury.

"*Háni! Sons éso tse-ná!*" And seizing the reporter by the shoulder, he spun him round (the young man revealed himself invitingly well-covered), aimed and, with all the force and accuracy of a champion foot-and-mouth-baller, delivered a most prodigious kick.

Eight minutes later, a new edition of *The Hourly Radio* was on sale in the streets of London. "HOURLY RADIO REPORTER HAS COCCYX KICKED BY MYSTERY SAVAGE," ran the headlines on the front page. "SENSATION IN SURREY."

1. Primo Mellon suggests the Spanish dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera (1870-1930) and Andrew W. Mellon (1855-1937), American banker and Secretary of the Treasury from 1921-1932.

“Sensation even in London,” thought the reporter when, on his return, he read the words. And a very painful sensation, what was more. He sat down gingerly to his luncheon.

Undeterred by that cautionary bruise on their colleague’s coccyx, four other reporters, representing the New York *Times*, the Frankfurt *Four-Dimensional Continuum*, *The Fordian Science Monito*r, and *The Delta Mirror*, called that afternoon at the lighthouse and met with receptions of progressively increasing violence.

From a safe distance and still rubbing his buttocks, “Benighted fool!” shouted the man from *The Fordian Science Monitor*, “why don’t you take *soma*?”

“Get away!” The Savage shook his fist.

The other retreated a few steps then turned round again. “Evil’s an unreality if you take a couple of grammes.”

“*Kohakwa iyathtokyai!*“The tone was menacingly derisive.

“Pain’s a delusion.”

“Oh, is it?” said the Savage and, picking up a thick hazel switch, strode forward.

The man from *The Fordian Science Monitor* made a dash for his helicopter.

After that the Savage was left for a time in peace. A few helicopters came and hovered inquisitively round the tower. He shot an arrow into the importunately nearest of them. It pierced the aluminum floor of the cabin; there was a shrill yell, and the machine went rocketing up into the air with all the acceleration that its super-charger could give it. The others, in future, kept their distance respectfully. Ignoring their tiresome humming (he likened himself in his imagination to one of the suitors of the Maiden of Mátsaki, unmoved and persistent among the winged vermin), the Savage dug at what was to be his garden. After a time the vermin evidently became bored and flew away; for hours at a stretch the sky above his head was empty and, but for the larks, silent.

The weather was breathlessly hot, there was thunder in the air. He had dug all the morning and was resting, stretched out along the floor. And suddenly the thought of Lenina was a real presence, naked and tangible, saying “Sweet!” and “Put your arms round me!”—in shoes and socks, perfumed. Impudent strumpet! But oh, oh, her arms round his neck, the lifting of her breasts, her mouth! Eternity was in our lips and eyes. Lenina … No, no, no, no! He sprang to his feet and, half naked as he was, ran out of the house. At the edge of the heath stood a clump of hoary juniper bushes. He flung himself against them, he embraced, not the smooth body of his desires, but an armful of green spikes. Sharp, with a thousand points, they pricked him. He tried to think of poor Linda, breathless and dumb, with her clutching hands and the unutterable terror in her eyes. Poor Linda whom he had sworn to remember. But it was still the presence of Lenina that haunted him. Lenina whom he had promised to forget. Even through the stab and sting of the juniper needles, his wincing flesh was aware of her, unescapably real. “Sweet, sweet … And if you wanted me too, why didn’t you …”

The whip was hanging on a nail by the door, ready to hand against the arrival of reporters. In a frenzy the Savage ran back to the house, seized it, whirled it. The knotted cords bit into his flesh.

“Strumpet! Strumpet!” he shouted at every blow as though it were Lenina (and how frantically, without knowing it, he wished it were), white, warm, scented, infamous Lenina that he was dogging thus. “Strumpet!” And then, in a voice of despair, “Oh, Linda, forgive me. Forgive me, God. I’m bad. I’m wicked. I’m … No, no, you strumpet, you strumpet!”

From his carefully constructed hide in the wood three hundred metres away, Darwin Bonaparte, the Feely Corporation’s most expert big game photographer had watched the whole proceedings. Patience and skill had been rewarded. He had spent three days sitting inside the bole of an artificial oak tree, three nights crawling on his belly through the heather, hiding microphones in gorse bushes, burying wires in the soft grey sand. Seventy-two hours of profound discomfort. But now me great moment had come—the greatest, Darwin Bonaparte had time to reflect, as he moved among his instruments,

the greatest since his taking of the famous all-howling stereoscopic feely of the gorillas' wedding. "Splendid," he said to himself, as the Savage started his astonishing performance. "Splendid!" He kept his telescopic cameras carefully aimed–glued to their moving objective; clapped on a higher power to get a close-up of the frantic and distorted face (admirable!); switched over, for half a minute, to slow motion (an exquisitely comical effect, he promised himself); listened in, meanwhile, to the blows, the groans, the wild and raving words that were being recorded on the sound-track at the edge of his film, tried the effect of a little amplification (yes, that was decidedly better); was delighted to hear, in a momentary lull, the shrill singing of a lark; wished the Savage would turn round so that he could get a good close-up of the blood on his back—and almost instantly (what astonishing luck!) the accommodating fellow did turn round, and he was able to take a perfect close-up.

"Well, that was grand!" he said to himself when it was all over. "Really grand!" He mopped his face. When they had put in the feely effects at the studio, it would be a wonderful film. Almost as good, thought Darwin Bonaparte, as the *Sperm Whale's Love-Life*—and that, by Ford, was saying a good deal!

Twelve days later *The Savage of Surrey* had been released and could be seen, heard and felt in every first-class feely-palace in Western Europe.

The effect of Darwin Bonaparte's film was immediate and enormous. On the afternoon which followed the evening of its release John's rustic solitude was suddenly broken by the arrival overhead of a great swarm of helicopters.

He was digging in his garden—digging, too, in his own mind, laboriously turning up the substance of his thought. Death—and he drove in his spade once, and again, and yet again. And all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death.[2] A convincing thunder rumbled through the words. He lifted another spadeful of earth. Why had Linda died? Why had she been allowed to become gradually less than human and at last … He shuddered. A good kissing carrion.[3] He planted his foot on his spade and stamped it fiercely into the tough ground. As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods; they kill us for their sport.[4] Thunder again; words that proclaimed themselves true—truer somehow than truth itself. And yet that same Gloucester had called them ever-gentle gods. Besides, thy best of rest is sleep and that thou oft provok'st; yet grossly fear'st thy death which is no more.[5] No more than sleep. Sleep. Perchance to dream.[6] His spade struck against a stone; he stooped to pick it up. For in that sleep of death, what dreams? …

A humming overhead had become a roar; and suddenly he was in shadow, there was something between the sun and him. He looked up, startled, from his digging, from his thoughts; looked up in a dazzled bewilderment, his mind still wandering in that other world of truer-than-truth, still focused on the immensities of death and deity; looked up and saw, close above him, the swarm of hovering machines. Like locusts they came, hung poised, descended all around him on the heather. And from out of the bellies of these giant grasshoppers stepped men in white viscose-flannels, women (for the weather was hot) in acetate-shantung pyjamas or velveteen shorts and sleeveless, half-unzippered singlets—one couple from each. In a few minutes there were dozens of them, standing in a wide circle round the lighthouse, staring, laughing, clicking their cameras, throwing (as to an ape) peanuts, packets of sex-hormone chewing-gum, pan-glandular *petits beurres*. And every moment—for across the Hog's Back the stream of traffic now flowed unceasingly—their numbers increased. As in a nightmare, the dozens became scores, the scores hundreds.

The Savage had retreated towards cover, and now, in the posture of an animal at bay, stood with his

2. *Macbeth* 5.5.22.
3. *Hamlet* 2.2.180.
4. *King Lear* 4.6.219.
5. *Measure for Measure* 3.1.17-19.
6. *Hamlet* 3.1.65.

back to the wall of the lighthouse, staring from face to face in speechless horror, like a man out of his senses.

From this stupor he was aroused to a more immediate sense of reality by the impact on his cheek of a well-aimed packet of chewing-gum. A shock of startling pain—and he was broad awake, awake and fiercely angry.

"Go away!" he shouted.

The ape had spoken; there was a burst of laughter and hand-clapping. "Good old Savage! Hurrah, hurrah!" And through the babel he heard cries of: "Whip, whip, the whip!"

Acting on the word's suggestion, he seized the bunch of knotted cords from its nail behind the door and shook it at his tormentors.

There was a yell of ironical applause.

Menacingly he advanced towards them. A woman cried out in fear. The line wavered at its most immediately threatened point, then stiffened again, stood firm. The consciousness of being in overwhelming force had given these sightseers a courage which the Savage had not expected of them. Taken aback, he halted and looked round.

"Why don't you leave me alone?" There was an almost plaintive note in his anger.

"Have a few magnesium-salted almonds!" said the man who, if the Savage were to advance, would be the first to be attacked. He held out a packet. "They're really very good, you know," he added, with a rather nervous smile of propitiation. "And the magnesium salts will help to keep you young."

The Savage ignored his offer. "What do you want with me?" he asked, turning from one grinning face to another. "What do you want with me?"

"The whip," answered a hundred voices confusedly. "Do the whipping stunt. Let's see the whipping stunt."

Then, in unison and on a slow, heavy rhythm, "We-want-the whip," shouted a group at the end of the line. "We-want-the whip."

Others at once took up the cry, and the phrase was repeated, parrot-fashion, again and again, with an ever-growing volume of sound, until, by the seventh or eighth reiteration, no other word was being spoken. "We-want-the whip."

They were all crying together; and, intoxicated by the noise, the unanimity, the sense of rhythmical atonement, they might, it seemed, have gone on for hours—almost indefinitely. But at about the twenty-fifth repetition the proceedings were startlingly interrupted. Yet another helicopter had arrived from across the Hog's Back, hung poised above the crowd, then dropped within a few yards of where the Savage was standing, in the open space between the line of sightseers and the lighthouse. The roar of the air screws momentarily drowned the shouting; then, as the machine touched the ground and the engines were turned off: "We-want-the whip; we-want-the whip," broke out again in the same loud, insistent monotone.

The door of the helicopter opened, and out stepped, first a fair and ruddy-faced young man, then, in green velveteen shorts, white shirt, and jockey cap, a young woman.

At the sight of the young woman, the Savage started, recoiled, turned pale.

The young woman stood, smiling at him—an uncertain, imploring, almost abject smile. The seconds passed. Her lips moved, she was saying something; but the sound of her voice was covered by the loud reiterated refrain of the sightseers.

"We-want-the whip! We-want-the whip!"

The young woman pressed both hands to her left side, and on that peach-bright, doll-beautiful face of hers appeared a strangely incongruous expression of yearning distress. Her blue eyes seemed to grow larger, brighter; and suddenly two tears rolled down her cheeks. Inaudibly, she spoke again; then, with a quick, impassioned gesture stretched out her arms towards the Savage, stepped forward.

"We-want-the whip! We-want …"

And all of a sudden they had what they wanted.

"Strumpet!" The Savage had rushed at her like a madman. "Fitchew!"[7] Like a madman, he was slashing at her with his whip of small cords.

Terrified, she had turned to flee, had tripped and fallen in the heather. "Henry, Henry!" she shouted. But her ruddy-faced companion had bolted out of harm's way behind the helicopter.

With a whoop of delighted excitement the line broke; there was a convergent stampede towards that magnetic centre of attraction. Pain was a fascinating horror.

"Fry, lechery, fry!"[8] Frenzied, the Savage slashed again.

Hungrily they gathered round, pushing and scrambling like swine about the trough.

"Oh, the flesh!" The Savage ground his teeth. This time it was on his shoulders that the whip descended. "Kill it, kill it!"

Drawn by the fascination of the horror of pain and, from within, impelled by that habit of cooperation, that desire for unanimity and atonement, which their conditioning had so ineradicably implanted in them, they began to mime the frenzy of his gestures, striking at one another as the Savage struck at his own rebellious flesh, or at that plump incarnation of turpitude writhing in the heather at his feet.

"Kill it, kill it, kill it …" The Savage went on shouting.

Then suddenly somebody started singing "Orgy-porgy" and, in a moment, they had all caught up the refrain and, singing, had begun to dance. Orgy-porgy, round and round and round, beating one another in six-eight time. Orgy-porgy …

It was after midnight when the last of the helicopters took its flight. Stupefied by *soma*, and exhausted by a long-drawn frenzy of sensuality, the Savage lay sleeping in the heather. The sun was already high when he awoke. He lay for a moment, blinking in owlish incomprehension at the light; then suddenly remembered—everything.

"Oh, my God, my God!" He covered his eyes with his hand.

That evening the swarm of helicopters that came buzzing across the Hog's Back was a dark cloud ten kilometres long. The description of last night's orgy of atonement had been in all the papers.

"Savage!" called the first arrivals, as they alighted from their machine. "Mr. Savage!"

There was no answer.

The door of the lighthouse was ajar. They pushed it open and walked into a shuttered twilight. Through an archway on the further side of the room they could see the bottom of the staircase that led up to the higher floors. Just under the crown of the arch dangled a pair of feet.

"Mr. Savage!"

Slowly, very slowly, like two unhurried compass needles, the feet turned towards the right; north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-south-west; then paused, and, after a few seconds, turned as unhurriedly back towards the left. South-south-west, south, southeast, east.

7. *Othello* 4.1.141. Cassio refers to Bianca, a prostitute, as a fitchew or polecat. The association with prostitutes was owing to its presumed lasciviousness and bad smell.

8. *Troilus and Cressida* 5.2.56.

209.

Study Questions and Activities

Study Questions and Activities

Sir Thomas More coined the word “utopia” in his fictional work *Utopia*, first published in Latin in 1516. He created the word by combining the Greek prefixes “ou”and “eu” with the suffix “topos.” Define the two Greek prefixes and the Greek suffix, and then show how the concept of utopia is inherently playing with two different places.**Epigraph**—What is an epigraph? Huxley uses the following quotation from Nicolas Berdiaeff, *Un nouveau moyen age* 1927, p. 262: Les utopies apparaissent comme bien plus réalisable qu’on ne le croyait autrefois. Et nous nous trouvons actuellement devant une question bien autrement angoissante: Comment éviter leur réalisation définitive? Les utopies sont réalisables. La vie marche vers les utopies. Et peut-être un siècle nouveau commence-t-il, un siècle où les intellectuels et la classe cultivée rêveront au moyens d’éviter les utopies et de retourner à une société non utopique, moins “parfaite” est plus libre. [Utopias appear to be more realizable than we used to believe. And we now find ourselves facing a deeply troubling question: How to avoid their definitive realization? Life marches towards utopia. And maybe a new century will begin, a century where the intellectuals and cultivated classes will dream of ways to avoid utopias and to return to a non-utopian society, less perfect and more free.]

Chapter 1

1. Notice the two sentence fragments with which Huxley begins the novel. If a 34-storey building is described as “squat,” then what kind of irony is Huxley using here?
2. Look up the word “identity” in a good dictionary. What aspect of the word is central to the world state’s philosophy?
3. Compare Huxley’s use of colour imagery in this chapter with that of Dickens in the second chapter of *Hard Times*.
4. Do Alphas and Betas undergo Bokanovsky’s Technique?
5. Describe how the government of the brave new world resembles that of H. G. Wells’s *A Modern Utopia* (1905) or that of *Men Like Gods* (1923).
6. Write a brief essay in which you speculate that Huxley borrowed ideas from Wells, especially Chapters 14, 15, and 20 from his dystopia “When the Sleeper Wakes.”

Chapter 2

1. What kind of **irony** does Huxley use when he gives the following line to the DHC: “The greatest moralizing and socializing force of all time”?

2. What is the status of the English language in A.F. 632? French?
3. Compare the first two chapters of Dickens's *Hard Times* ("The One Thing Needful" and "Murdering the Innocents") with the first two chapters of *Brave New World*. How is Henry Foster like Bitzer? What values do they share? Which kind of education do both dystopias—i.e., the Brave New World and Dickens's Coketown— prefer: particular or general education—or, in other words, vocational or liberal education?

Chapter 3

1. What is the world's population in 632 A.F.?
2. *Brave New World*, like T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, uses montage technique as in film. This device is especially evident in Chapter 3, where settings and character shift with no transition devices being offered to the reader. Scenic cuts become faster as the chapter advances. In the first two and a half pages of Scene 1, in Chapter 3, we observe the DHC and his students outside the Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, watching the children at play—first, Centrifugal Bumple-Puppy, then erotic play; followed by the introduction of the World Controller, Mond; then to indicate a shift of scene and character, comes a double space. Then we see Henry Foster snubbing Bernard Marx at the embryo store as Lenina enters. Scenes shift between the DHC and Mond's history lesson and the dialogue between Foster, the Assistant Predestinator. Try placing an M for Mond at the beginning of each of his scenes, L for Lenina's as they counterpoint, and notice how gradually the interval between Mond's words and Lenina's gets reduced. Sometimes only one line intervenes until Mond or Lenina/Fanny take up their lines.
3. Give one example of Mond's being depicted as an ironic Christ figure: it occurs near the end of the chapter. How is Mond an ironic Christ figure?
4. How is Mond like one of H. G. Wells's samurai in his *A Modern Utopia*?
5. In a brief essay, compare Huxley and Eliot's use of juxtaposition of past versus present.
6. After reading Mond's history lesson in Chapter 3, give the chief reason for the creation of the Brave New World.
7. The utopian society of the Brave New World apparently minimizes the problems associated with old age through hormone treatments (Violent Passion surrogates, gonadal hormones). Look up the scientists Serge Voronoff (1866-1951) and Eugen Steinach (1861-1944). Huxley refers throughout the novel to ductless glands, adrenals, pituitary glands, internal and external secretions, and gonads. He is almost certainly referring to the rejuvenation theories of Steinach and Voronoff.) Interestingly, late in his life, W. B. Yeats underwent such rejuvenation therapy and reported positive results.) By 1929, the Marx Brothers famously alluded to this rejuvenation fad in their song "Monkey Doodle-Doo" in their film *The Cocoanuts:* "Let me take you by the hand/ Over to the jungle band/If you're too old for dancing/Get yourself a monkey gland/And then let's go, my little dearie, there's the Darwin theory…"
8. You might consider writing an essay on Huxley's use of rejuvenation therapy in *BNW*.

Chapter 4

1. List the uniform colour for Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons.

2. Why is Community Singing encouraged in the brave new world?
3. Notice the special meaning for the word "Corporation." List a few examples and then clarify what a Corporation is. What European state was known as a "corporate state" between the wars? Is the Brave New World a "corporate state"?
4. Before her date with Bernard, Lenina rushes to meet Henry Foster, fearing her lateness will annoy Henry, who is a stickler for punctuality. His efficiency-expert attention to time introduces the satire on industrial rationalization as championed by F. W. Taylor, a time-and-motion engineer, dubbed "the father of scientific management," and whose books greatly influenced Ford. See first Then, look at the following article: "Sophistication of Mass Production".

Chapter 5

1. The chapter begins with several allusions to Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." Read the poem, especially the first 50 lines.
2. Make a list of words that Huxley borrows from Gray here. Write a brief essay on the thematic use Huxley makes of the contrast between Gray's poem and the novel.

Chapter 6

1. Contrast what Henry Foster expects from his relationship with Lenina with what Bernard Marx wants from her.
2. What is the main conflict in this chapter? Between which characters?
3. A key symbol is the electric fence separating "civilization from savagery": Uphill and down, across the deserts of salt or sand, through forests, into the violet depth of canyons, over crag and peak and table-topped mesa, **the fence marched on and on, irresistibly the straight line, the geometrical symbol of triumphant human purpose.** And at its foot, here and there, a mosaic of white bones, a still unrotted carcase dark on the tawny ground marked the place where deer or steer, puma or porcupine or coyote, or the greedy turkey buzzards drawn down by the whiff of carrion and fulminated as though by a poetic justice, had come too close to the destroying wires. "They never learn," said the green-uniformed pilot, pointing down at the skeletons on the ground below them. "And they never will learn," he added and laughed, as though he had somehow scored a personal triumph over the electrocuted animals."
4. This image needs to be examined carefully. Typically, the straight line symbolizes human reason, science. Notice that man has conquered nature, and that the animals are killed by the voltage in the man-made fence. Just before he was writing *Brave New World*, Huxley was highly critical of LeCorbusier, the famous French/Swiss architect. Look him up in Wikipedia.
5. In his foreword to *Urbanisme* (Englist translation, *The City of Tomorrow)* (1929), he said, "**A curved road is a donkey path; a straight road is a road for men.**" One thinks here of the myth of Pandora's box and of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden for eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Pride is the common denominator in both myths. Look at the "Forays into Urbanism 1922-1929 section of the site mentioned above. Pay particular attention to the photo of Le Corbusier's sketch of a city for three million people, with its 60-storey buildings, rooftop helipads, etc. Note also that Le Corbusier hoped that politically minded industrialists in France

would lead the way with their efficient Taylorist and Fordist strategies adopted from American models to reorganize society. In this new industrialist spirit, Le Corbusier began a new journal called *L'Esprit Nouveau* that advocated the use of modern, industrial techniques and strategies to transform society into a more efficient environment with a higher standard of living on all socioeconomic levels. He forcefully argued that this transformation was necessary to avoid the spectre of revolution that would otherwise shake society. His dictum "Architecture or Revolution," developed in his articles in this journal, became his rallying cry for the book *Vers une architecture* ("Towards an Architecture," translated into English as *Towards a New Architecture*), which comprised selected articles from *L'Esprit Nouveau* between 1920 and 1923.

6. Huxley had a long-standing aversion to LeCorbusier's urban style, calling him "an enemy of privacy," and *BNW* is an attack on his kind of futuristic city.
7. Is Huxley warning against human pride here, our tendency to try to dominate nature, to improve upon it as Henry Foster is so eager to demonstrate?
8. You might consider writing an essay on Huxley's critique of modernist architects such as LeCorbusier.

Chapter 7

1. The expression, "Cleanliness is next to godliness" is not from the Bible. Who popularized the adage?
2. What is John's mother Linda's relationship to nature and technology?
3. Explain how Linda's allusion to the Chelsea Abortion Centre is an example of **bathos**. Note that Sir Christopher Wren's classically designed Chelsea Hospital has now become an abortion centre.
4. What key information concerning the D.H.C. is divulged in this chapter?

Chapter 8

1. How does young John react to the relationship between his mother and Popé, the man who gave John a tattered copy of Shakespeare's complete works?
2. John learns to read, but the only book besides Linda's technical manuals is *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. Immediately the descriptions in *Hamlet* and other plays provide John with the negative vocabulary and another perspective with which to view Popé and Linda's sexual behaviour: "Nay, but to live /In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,/Stewed in corruption, honeying and making love/Over the nasty sty." (*Hamlet*, 3.4.83-84).
3. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare depicts women as either **madonnas** (innocents like Ophelia before she falls out of Hamlet's favour) or else **whores** (Gertrude with Claudius or Ophelia after her rejection of Hamlet's love). John will soon begin to idealize Lenina, who is so unlike his aging mother. John had earlier loved the Indian maid Kiakimé, but at age 16 his heart was broken as she married another—a young, full-blooded Zuñi man, not an outsider like John. John was also an outsider to the rites and mysteries discussed in the kiva, so the essence of John's experience is rejection. He will be an outsider in both communities, because of his different race in the reserve, and because of his different values in the brave new world.

4. Notice Freud's articulation of the whore-madonna theory.
5. Look up Ernest Jones, Freud's biographer. Then read this article, which explains how Jones interpreted Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in light of the Freudian Oedipus complex.

Chapter 9

1. Why do you think Mond allows John and Linda to come with Bernard and Lenina to "civilization"?
2. What is the attitude to romantic love in the Brave New World?

Chapter 10

1. What is the significance of the perfectly synchronized clocks in all 4,000 rooms of the Centre? How does this image link to F.W. Taylor?
2. In what ways does the Brave New World resemble a beehive or ant colony?

Chapter 11

1. What scene causes John to repeat Miranda's famous phrase "O, brave new world" and how is his meaning different from the first time he says this at the end of Chapter 8? In what later chapter does John utter these lines yet again? Clarify the irony with respect to John's three separate quotations of Miranda's words.
2. Why is it more difficult, according to Miss Keate, to educate upper caste, one-egg, one adult students?

Chapter 12

1. What is the central paradox in the poem Helmholtz writes? In what way does it resemble William Wordsworth's sonnet, "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802"?
2. What does it have in common with T.S. Eliot's "Preludes"?
3. In a brief essay, analyze Helmholtz' 24 line poem, beginning "Yesterday's committee…"

Chapter 13

1. Discuss the significance of the promising Alpha-minus administrator's dying of trypanosomiasis. Try to relate it to one of the main hypnopaedic maxims of *BNW*.
2. What does John Savage mean when he says "some kinds of baseness are nobly undergone"?
3. In what way is Lenina atavistic?
4. When Lenina grabs John and kisses him, what does he experience and why?

5. Describe the change in the image patterns found in the poetic lines that John suddenly starts to quote from Shakespeare. Account for the sudden change in the kinds of images.

Chapter 14

1. What is the earliest entry in the Oxford English Dictionary for the word "television"?
2. Whose name does Linda call out when John visits her in the hospital?

Chapter 15

1. How does the historic *soma* and its use differ from the *soma* of *BNW*?

Chapter 16

1. "Chapter 16 shows Bernard Marx at his worst." Do you agree or disagree?
2. What was the Cyprus experiment?
3. In the discussion scene between with Mond and John, it is hard not to think of another poem by Thomas Gray here, "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College." In that poem, Gray contrasts the thoughtless days of youth before the pain of adulthood are known. "Regardless of their doom/The little victims play!/No sense have they of ills to come,/Nor care beyond today." (ll. 51-54). As Mond knows, and as John must learn, the Brave New World eliminates all the ills which Gray attributes to adulthood: the Passions of Anger, Fear, Shame, pining Love, Jealousy, Envy, Care, Despair, Sorrow, Ambition, Death, Poverty, and slow consuming age. The inhabitants of Mond's stable, controlled society, unlike men, are not "condemned alike to groan."
4. How can Mond's position be partly summed up by the last stanza (lines 91-100)?

Chapter 17

Huxley was indebted to Dostoevsky's famous Grand Inquisitor chapter from *The Brothers Karamazov* in Chapters 16 and 17, with John resembling Dostoevsky's Christ figure, and Mond representing his Grand Inquisitor.

The essence of the conflict between John and Mond is whether happiness (Mond's goal) is the chief goal in human society or whether it is some form of heightened consciousness/freedom for each person (John's goal). Dostoeivsky used Satan's triple temptation of Christ in the wilderness as his starting point. [See Matthew: ch 4]

1. In the context of the Grand Inquisitor, why do you think Mond encourages the Fordian religion? Why does the Brave New World bother with religion at all?

Chapter 18

1. Do you consider Bernard Marx a static or a dynamic, changing character? That is, does he grow or change during the novel? Is he any different in his final appearance in Chapter 18?
2. Who is Darwin Bonaparte and who might be his modern equivalent?
3. In the last scene, what might the references to the compass points suggest?

XXVIII

George Orwell (1903-1950)

210.

Biography

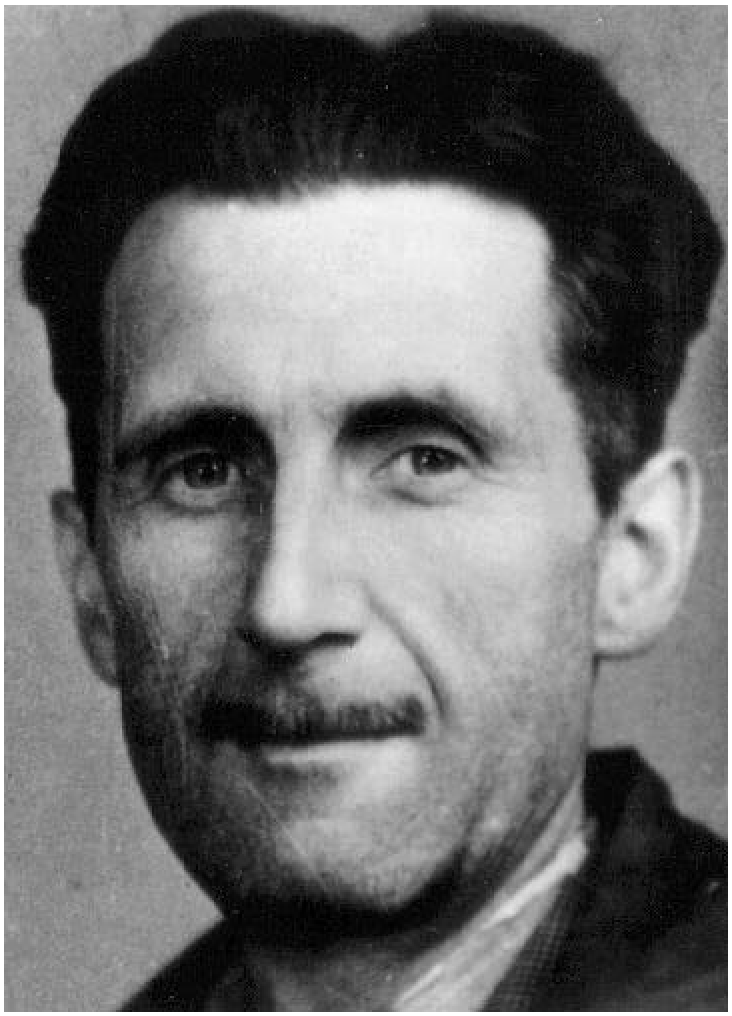


Figure 1: George Orwell.

Eric Arthur Blair, born in India on June 25, 1903, and known by his pen name, George Orwell, was an English novelist, essayist, journalist, and critic. His work is marked by lucid prose, awareness of social injustice, opposition to totalitarianism, and commitment to democratic socialism.

Commonly ranked as one of the most influential English writers of the 20th century, and as one of the most important chroniclers of English culture of his generation, Orwell wrote literary criticism, poetry, fiction, and polemical journalism. He is best known for the dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and the allegorical novella *Animal Farm* (1945). His book *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), an account of his experiences in the Spanish Civil War, is widely acclaimed, as are his numerous essays on politics,

literature, language, and culture. In 2008, *The Times* ranked him second on a list of the 50 greatest British writers since 1945.

Orwell's work continues to influence popular and political culture, and the term Orwellian — descriptive of totalitarian or authoritarian social practices — has entered the language together with several of his neologisms, including "cold war," "Big Brother," "thought police," "Room 101," "doublethink," and "thought crime."

George Orwell died on January 21, 1950, in London, England.

From Wikipedia

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211.

Pleasure Spots

George Orwell

(Tribune, 11 January 1946)

Some months ago I cut out of a shiny magazine some paragraphs written by a female journalist and describing the pleasure resort of the future. She had recently been spending some time at Honolulu, where the rigours of war do not seem to have been very noticeable. However, “a transport pilot. . .told me that with all the inventiveness packed into this war, it was a pity someone hadn’t found out how a tired and lifehungry man could relax, rest, play poker, drink, and make love, all at once, and round the clock, and come out of it feeling good and fresh and ready for the job again.” This reminded her of an entrepreneur she had met recently who was planning a “pleasure spot which he thinks will catch on tomorrow as dog racing and dance halls did yesterday.” The entrepreneur’s dream is described in some detail:

His blue-prints pictured a space covering several acres, under a series of sliding roofs — for the British weather is unreliableand with a central space spread over with an immense dance floor made of translucent plastic which can be illuminated from beneath. Around it are grouped other functional spaces, at different levels. Balcony bars and restaurants commanding high views of the city roofs, and ground-level replicas. A battery of skittle[1] alleys. Two blue lagoons: one, periodically agitated by waves, for strong swimmers, and another, a smooth and summery pool, for playtime bathers. Sunlight lamps over the pools to simulate high summer on days when the roofs don’t slide back to disclose a hot sun in a cloudless sky. Rows of bunks on which people wearing sun-glasses and slips can lie and start a tan or deepen an existing one under a sunray lamp.

Music seeping through hundreds of grills connected with a central distributing stage, where dance or symphonic orchestras play or the radio programme can be caught, amplified, and disseminated. Outside, two 1,000-car parks. One, free. The other, an open-air cinema drive-in, cars queueing to move through turnstiles, and the film thrown on a giant screen facing a row of assembled cars. Uniformed male attendants check the cars, provide free aid and water, sell petrol and oil. Girls in white satin slacks take orders for buffet dishes and drinks, and bring them on trays.

Whenever one hears such phrases as “pleasure spot”, “pleasure resort”, “pleasure city”, it is difficult not to remember the often-quoted opening of Coleridge’s “Kubla Khan”.

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills

1. Similar to bowling.

Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But it will be seen that Coleridge has got it all wrong. He strikes a false note straight off with that talk about "sacred" rivers and "measureless" caverns. In the hands of the above-mentioned entrepreneur, Kubla Khan's project would have become something quite different. The caverns, air-conditioned, discreetly lighted and with their original rocky interior buried under layers of tastefully-coloured plastics, would be turned into a series of tea-grottoes in the Moorish, Caucasian or Hawaiian styles. Alph, the sacred river, would be dammed up to make an artificially-warmed bathing pool, while the sunless sea would be illuminated from below with pink electric lights, and one would cruise over it in real Venetian gondolas each equipped with its own radio set. The forests and "spots of greenery" referred to by Coleridge would be cleaned up to make way for glass-covered tennis courts, a bandstand, a roller-skating rink and perhaps a nine-hole golf course. In short, there would be everything that a "life-hungry" man could desire.

I have no doubt that, all over the world, hundreds of pleasure resorts similar to the one described above are now being planned, and perhaps are even being built. It is unlikely that they will be finished — world events will see to that — but they represent faithfully enough the modern civilised man's idea of pleasure. Something of the kind is already partially attained in the more magnificent dance halls, movie palaces, hotels, restaurants and luxury liners. On a pleasure cruise or in a Lyons Corner House[2] one already gets something more than a glimpse of this future paradise. Analysed, its main characteristics are these:

One is never alone.

One never does anything for oneself.

One is never within sight of wild vegetation or natural objects of any kind.

Light and temperature are always artificially regulated.

One is never out of the sound of music.

The music — and if possible it should be the same music for everybody — is the most important ingredient. Its function is to prevent thought and conversation, and to shut out any natural sound, such as the song of birds or the whistling of the wind, that might otherwise intrude. The radio is already consciously used for this purpose by innumerable people. In very many English homes the radio is literally never turned off, though it is manipulated from time to time so as to make sure that only light music will come out of it. I know people who will keep the radio playing all through a meal and at the same time continue talking just loudly enough for the voices and the music to cancel out. This is done with a definite purpose. The music prevents the conversation from becoming serious or even coherent, while the chatter of voices stops one from listening attentively to the music and thus prevents the onset of that dreaded thing, thought. For

The lights must never go out.
The music must always play,
Lest we should see where we are;
Lost in a haunted wood,
Children afraid of the dark
Who have never been happy or good.[3]

It is difficult not to feel that the unconscious aim in the most typical modern pleasure resorts is a return to the womb. For there, too, one was never alone, one never saw daylight, the temperature was always

2. Large multi-floor establishments in London with numerous restaurants, food, and other leisure services.
3. From W.H. Auden, "September 1, 1939".

regulated, one did not have to worry about work or food, and one's thoughts, if any, were drowned by a continuous rhythmic throbbing.

When one looks at Coleridge's very different conception of a "pleasure dome", one sees that it revolves partly round gardens and partly round caverns, rivers, forests and mountains with "deep romantic chasms" — in short, round what is called Nature. But the whole notion of admiring Nature, and feeling a sort of religious awe in the presence of glaciers, deserts or waterfalls, is bound up with the sense of man's littleness and weakness against the power of the universe. The moon is beautiful partly because we cannot reach it, (the sea is impressive because one can never be sure of crossing it safely. Even the pleasure one takes in a flower — and this is true even of a botanist who knows all there is to be known about the flower is dependent partly on the sense of mystery. But meanwhile man's power over Nature is steadily increasing. With the aid of the atomic bomb we could literally move mountains: we could even, so it is said, alter the climate of the earth by melting the polar ice-caps and irrigating the Sahara. Isn't there, therefore, something sentimental and obscurantist in preferring bird-song to swing music and in wanting to leave a few patches of wildness here and there instead of covering the whole surface of the earth with a network of Autobahnen flooded by artificial sunlight?

The question only arises because in exploring the physical universe man has made no attempt to explore himself. Much of what goes by the name of pleasure is simply an effort to destroy consciousness. If one started by asking, what is man? what are his needs? how can he best express himself? one would discover that merely having the power to avoid work and live one's life from birth to death in electric light and to the tune of tinned music is not a reason for doing so. Man needs warmth, society, leisure, comfort and security: he also needs solitude, creative work and the sense of wonder. If he recognised this he could use the products of science and industrialism eclectically, applying always the same test: does this make me more human or less human? He would then learn that the highest happiness does not lie in relaxing, resting, playing poker, drinking and making love simultaneously. And the instinctive horror which all sensitive people feel at the progressive mechanisation of life would be seen not to be a mere sentimental archaism, but to be fully justified. For man only stays human by preserving large patches of simplicity in his life, while the tendency of many modern inventions — in particular the film, the radio and the aeroplane — is to weaken his consciousness, dull his curiosity, and, in general, drive him nearer to the animals.

212.

Can Socialists be Happy?

George Orwell

pseud. 'John Freeman' (*Tribune* 20 Dec. 1943)

The thought of Christmas raises almost automatically the thought of Charles Dickens, and for two very good reasons. To begin with, Dickens is one of the few English writers who have actually written about Christmas. Christmas is the most popular of English festivals, and yet it has produced astonishingly little literature. There are the carols, mostly medieval in origin; there is a tiny handful of poems by Robert Bridges, T. S. Eliot, and some others, and there is Dickens; but there is very little else. Secondly, Dickens is remarkable, indeed almost unique, among modern writers in being able to give a convincing picture of happiness.

Dickens dealt successfully with Christmas twice in a chapter of *The Pickwick Papers* and in *A Christmas Carol*. The latter story was read to Lenin on his deathbed and according to his wife, he found its 'bourgeois sentimentality' completely intolerable. Now in a sense Lenin was right: but if he had been in better health he would perhaps have noticed that the story has interesting sociological implications. To begin with, however thick Dickens may lay on the paint, however disgusting the 'pathos' of Tiny Tim may be, the Cratchit family give the impression of enjoying themselves. They sound happy as, for instance, the citizens of William Morris's *News From Nowhere* don't sound happy. Moreover, and Dickens's understanding of this is one of the secrets of his power, their happiness derives mainly from contrast. They are in high spirits because for once in a way they have enough to eat. The wolf is at the door, but he is wagging his tail. The steam of the Christmas pudding drifts across a background of pawnshops and sweated labour, and in a double sense the ghost of Scrooge stands beside the dinner table. Bob Cratchit even wants to drink to Scrooge's health, which Mrs Cratchit rightly refuses. The Cratchits are able to enjoy Christmas precisely because it only comes once a year. Their happiness is convincing just because Christmas only comes once a year. Their happiness is convincing just because it is described as incomplete.

All efforts to describe permanent happiness, on the other hand, have been failures. Utopias (incidentally the coined word Utopia doesn't mean '*a good place*', it means merely a '*non-existent place*') have been common in literature of the past three or four hundred years but the 'favourable' ones are invariably unappetising, and usually lacking in vitality as well.

By far the best known modern Utopias are those of H. G. Wells. Wells's vision of the future is almost fully expressed in two books written in the early Twenties, *The Dream* and *Men Like Gods*. Here you have a picture of the world as Wells would like to see it or thinks he would like to see it. It is a world whose keynotes are enlightened hedonism and scientific curiosity. All the evils and miseries we now suffer from have vanished. Ignorance, war, poverty, dirt, disease, frustration, hunger, fear, overwork, superstition all vanished. So expressed, it is impossible to deny that that is the kind of world we all hope for. We all want to abolish the things Wells wants to abolish. But is there anyone who actually wants to live in a Wellsian Utopia? On the contrary, not to live in a world like that, not to wake up in a hygenic garden suburb infested by naked schoolmarms, has actually become a conscious political motive. A book like *Brave New World* is an expression of the actual fear that modern man feels of the rationalised

hedonistic society which it is within his power to create. A Catholic writer said recently that Utopias are now technically feasible and that in consequence how to avoid Utopia had become a serious problem.[1] We cannot write this off as merely a silly remark. For one of the sources of the Fascist movement is the desire to avoid a too-rational and too-comfortable world.

All 'favourable' Utopias seem to be alike in postulating perfection while being unable to suggest happiness. *News From Nowhere* is a sort of goody-goody version of the Wellsian Utopia. Everyone is kindly and reasonable, all the upholstery comes from *Liberty's*[2], but the impression left behind is of a sort of watery melancholy. But it is more impressive that Jonathan Swift, one of the greatest imaginative writers who have ever lived, is no more successful in constructing a 'favourable' Utopia than the others.

The earlier parts of *Gulliver's Travels* are probably the most devastating attack on human society that has ever been written. Every word of them is relevant today; in places they contain quite detailed prophecies of the political horrors of our own time. Where Swift fails, however, is in trying to describe a race of beings whom he admires. In the last part, in contrast with disgusting Yahoos, we are shown the noble Houyhnhnms, intelligent horses who are free from human failings. Now these horses, for all their high character and unfailing common sense, are remarkably dreary creatures. Like the inhabitants of various other Utopias, they are chiefly concerned with avoiding fuss. They live uneventful, subdued, 'reasonable' lives, free not only from quarrels, disorder or insecurity of any kind, but also from 'passion', including physical love. They choose their mates on eugenic principles, avoid excesses of affection, and appear somewhat glad to die when their time comes. In the earlier parts of the book Swift has shown where man's folly and scoundrelism lead him: but take away the folly and scoundrelism, and all you are left with, apparently, is a tepid sort of existence, hardly worth leading.

Attempts at describing a definitely other-worldly happiness have been no more successful. Heaven is as great a flop as Utopia though Hell occupies a respectable place in literature, and has often been described most minutely and convincingly.

It is a commonplace that the Christian Heaven, as usually portrayed, would attract nobody. Almost all Christian writers dealing with Heaven either say frankly that it is indescribable or conjure up a vague picture of gold, precious stones, and the endless singing of hymns. This has, it is true, inspired some of the best poems in the world:

Thy walls are of chalcedony,
Thy bulwarks diamonds square,
Thy gates are of right orient pearl
Exceeding rich and rare![3]

But what it could not do was to describe a condition in which the ordinary human being actively wanted to be. Many a revivalist minister, many a Jesuit priest (see, for instance, the terrific sermon in James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist*) has frightened his congregation almost out of their skins with his word-pictures of Hell. But as soon as it comes to Heaven, there is a prompt falling-back on words like 'ecstasy' and 'bliss', with little attempt to say what they consist in. Perhaps the most vital bit of writing on this subject is the famous passage in which Tertullian explains that one of the chief joys of Heaven is watching the tortures of the damned.

The pagan versions of Paradise are little better, if at all. One has the feeling it is always twilight in the Elysian fields. Olympus, where the gods lived, with their nectar and ambrosia, and their nymphs

1. Berdyaev, Nikolai (1874-1948). Huxley takes as his epigraph to *Brave New World,* this excerpt from Berdyaev's book *The End of Our Time* (London: 1933), original French version *Un nouveau moyen age*: Paris, 1927).
2. Liberty. A fashionable West End department store in London's Regent Street, specializing in luxury goods.
3. The New Jerusalem (1601). Anon. The hymn begins: "Jerusalem, my happy home!/ When shall I come to thee?/When shall my sorrows have an end? /Thy joys when shall I see?

and Hebes, the '*immortal tarts*' as D. H. Lawrence called them,[4] might be a bit more homelike than the Christian Heaven, but you would not want to spend a long time there. As for the Muslim Paradise, with its 77 houris[5] per man, all presumably clamouring for attention at the same moment, it is just a nightmare. Nor are the spiritualists, though constantly assuring us that '*all is bright and beautiful*', able to describe any next-world activity which a thinking person would find endurable, let alone attractive.

It is the same with attempted descriptions of perfect happiness which are neither Utopian nor other-worldly, but merely sensual. They always give an impression of emptiness or vulgarity, or both. At the beginning of *La Pucelle* Voltaire describes the life of Charles IX with his mistress, Agnes Sorel. They were 'always happy', he says. And what did their happiness consist in? An endless round of feasting, drinking, hunting and love-making. Who would not sicken of such an existence after a few weeks? Rabelais describes the fortunate spirits who have a good time in the next world to console them for having had a bad time in this one. They sing a song which can be roughly translated: '*To leap, to dance, to play tricks, to drink the wine both white and red, and to do nothing all day long except count gold crowns*' how boring it sounds, after all![6] The emptiness of the whole notion of an everlasting 'good time' is shown up in Breughel's picture *The Land of the Sluggard*, where the three great lumps of fat lie asleep, head to head, with the boiled eggs and roast legs of pork coming up to be eaten of their own accord.[7]

It would seem that human beings are not able to describe, nor perhaps to imagine, happiness except in terms of contrast. That is why the conception of Heaven or Utopia varies from age to age. In pre-industrial society Heaven was described as a place of endless rest, and as being paved with gold, because the experience of the average human being was overwork and poverty. The houris of the Muslim Paradise reflected a polygamous society where most of the women disappeared into the harems of the rich. But these pictures of 'eternal bliss' always failed because as the bliss became eternal (eternity being thought of as endless time), the contrast ceased to operate. Some of the conventions embedded in our literature first arose from physical conditions which have now ceased to exist. The cult of spring is an example. In the Middle Ages spring did not primarily mean swallows and wild flowers. It meant green vegetables, milk and fresh meat after several months of living on salt pork in smoky windowless huts. The spring songs were gay: "Do nothing but eat and make good cheer, /And thank Heaven for the merry year /When flesh is cheap and females dear, /And lusty lads roam here and there /So merrily, /And ever among so merrily!"[8]—because there was something to be so gay about. The winter was over, that was the great thing. Christmas itself, a pre-Christian festival, probably started because there had to be an occasional outburst of overeating and drinking to make a break in the unbearable northern winter.

The inability of mankind to imagine happiness except in the form of relief, either from effort or pain, presents Socialists with a serious problem. Dickens can describe a poverty-stricken family tucking into a roast goose, and can make them appear happy; on the other hand, the inhabitants of perfect universes seem to have no spontaneous gaiety and are usually somewhat repulsive into the bargain. But clearly we are not aiming at the kind of world Dickens described, nor, probably, at any world he was capable of imagining. The Socialist objective is not a society where everything comes right in the end, because kind old gentlemen give away turkeys. What are we aiming at, if not a society in which 'charity' would be unnecessary? We want a world where Scrooge, with his dividends, and Tiny Tim, with his tuberculous leg, would both be unthinkable. But does that mean we are aiming at some painless, effortless Utopia? At the risk of saying something which the editors of *Tribune* may not endorse,[9] I suggest that the real

4. Lawrence, "Give Us Gods."
5. A voluptuous, beautiful, alluring woman.
6. Gargantua and Pantagruel, Chapter 30.
7. See Breughel, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Land_of_Cockaigne_(Bruegel)
8. Shakespeare, *2 Henry IV*, 5:3, 15-20.
9. Orwell was literary editor of *Tribune*, a left-wing weekly, from 1943-1945.

objective of Socialism is not happiness. Happiness hitherto has been a by-product, and for all we know it may always remain so. The real objective of Socialism is human brotherhood. This is widely felt to be the case, though it is not usually said, or not said loudly enough. Men use up their lives in heart-breaking political struggles, or get themselves killed in civil wars, or tortured in the secret prisons of the Gestapo, not in order to establish some central-heated, air-conditioned, strip-lighted Paradise, but because they want a world in which human beings love one another instead of swindling and murdering one another. And they want that world as a first step. Where they go from there is not so certain, and the attempt to foresee it in detail merely confuses the issue.

Socialist thought has to deal in prediction, but only in broad terms. One often has to aim at objectives which one can only very dimly see. At this moment, for instance, the world is at war and wants peace. Yet the world has no experience of peace, and never has had, unless the Noble Savage once existed. The world wants something which it is dimly aware could exist, but cannot accurately define. This Christmas Day, thousands of men will be bleeding to death in the Russian snows, or drowning in icy waters, or blowing one another to pieces on swampy islands of the Pacific; homeless children will be scrabbling for food among the wreckage of German cities. To make that kind of thing impossible is a good objective. But to say in detail what a peaceful world would be like is a different matter.

Nearly all creators of Utopia have resembled the man who has toothache, and therefore thinks happiness consists in not having toothache. They wanted to produce a perfect society by an endless continuation of something that had only been valuable because it was temporary. The wider course would be to say that there are certain lines along which humanity must move, the grand strategy is mapped out, but detailed prophecy is not our business. Whoever tries to imagine perfection simply reveals his own emptiness. This is the case even with a great writer like Swift, who can flay a bishop or a politician so neatly, but who, when he tries to create a superman, merely leaves one with the impression—the very last he can have intended—that the stinking Yahoos had in them more possibility of development than the enlightened Houyhnhnms.

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213.

Study Questions, Activities, and Resources

Study Questions and Activities

"Pleasure Spots"

1. Compare Orwell's idea about the modern world with the depiction of Lenina's dates with Henry and Bernard in Chapters 5 and 6 of *Brave New World*, especially her date with Bernard.

"Can Socialists Be Happy?"

1. This essay appeared under the byline "John Freeman," in *Tribune*, December 20, 1943, yet it has been attributed to George Orwell. Read the following discussion and, in point form, list the reasons Orwell has been credited with authorship.
2. Orwell writes, "All the evils and miseries we now suffer from have vanished. Ignorance, war, poverty, dirt, disease, frustration, hunger, fear, overwork, superstition all vanished. So expressed, it is impossible to deny that that is the kind of world we all hope for. We all want to abolish the things Wells wants to abolish. But is there anyone who actually wants to live in a Wellsian Utopia?" Write a brief essay defending *Brave New World* as a utopia in which one might want to live.

Resources

Read Orwell's brief essay on Kipling, 1936.

Now, after reading Orwell's 1936 essay on Kipling (not to be confused with his longer essay written in 1942), clarify what Orwell means in the following sentence, taken from the 1936 essay: "…The picture then called up by the word "empire" was a picture of overworked officials and frontier skirmishes, not of Lord Beaverbrook and Australian butter."

You might also enjoy reading Orwell's longer essay on Kipling, published in 1942.

You might also wish to view the following clips: Oxford 2011 Orwell vs Kipling

Film version *Animal Farm* (1954)

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?p=1071

TV Dramatization *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1954 BBC Adaptation Nigel Kneale)

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?p=1071

Appendix 1: A Mini-Casebook on The Turn of the Screw

General Resources

- Book Drum *Turn of Screw* annotations. Good overview and notes, with a link to Freud's *Studies on Hysteria*
- Lamar University Critical Edition *A Closer Look at "The Turn of the Screw"*

Research Essay 1

Readings for Suggested Research Essay: Is the Governess inventing the ghosts or is the reader to see them as real? (Known as the Apparitionist versus Non-Apparitionist Controversy) Suggested length (1,500-2,500 words).

- The Turn of the Screw Chapter 3 (and 4) will make excellent starting points for this topic. Parkinson provides invaluable discussion of the Apparitionist versus Non-Apparitionist debate.
- Sexton, James. "Non-apparitionist reading of Turn of Screw" (1976).
- Valino, Raul. "The Role of the Governess in *The Turn of the Screw*," *Odiséa* 11.
- Al-Qurani, Shonayfa Mohammed. "Hallucinations or Realities: The Ghosts in Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*."
- http://cohenhandouts.wikispaces.com/file/view/EdmundWilsonAmbiguityOfJames.pdf/266013608/EdmundWilsonAmbiguityOfJames.pdf The most famous of the non-apparitionist, Freudian interpretations. This link is an excerpt, but Wilson's essay is discussed at length in Parkinson above, Chapter 3. The full text is in *The Triple Thinkers* as well as in Willen, Gerald. *A Casebook on Henry James's The Turn of the Screw*. Crowell: New York: 2nd ed. and in Esch, Deborah, and Jonathan Warren, eds. *The Turn of the Screw*, Norton Critical Editions, 2nd ed. (not reprinted in 1st ed. R. Kimbrough).
- "The Freudian Reading of *The Turn of the Screw*." R. Heilman. [JSTOR. Your B.C. college library provides free access. If you do not have library access to JSTOR, a read-only version can be accessed online free of charge. See JSTOR "register and read."]
- "Mr. Edmund Wilson and *The Turn of the Screw*." A.J.A. Waldock. [JSTOR] and Willen, 171-173.
- "A Note on the Freudian Reading of *The Turn of the Screw*." [JSTOR] and Willen, 239-44.
- "Give the Screw Another Turn—A Cultural Re-Reading of The *Turn of the Screw*."
- "The Role of Repression in Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*." Student essay.

Research Essay 2

Compare and contrast any two of the following film adaptations of *The Turn of the Screw*, stating your preference and why.

(Suggested length) 1,500 words

- A. Dan Curtis dir., 1974 ABC.
- B. Ben Bolt, dir. 1999 ITV, UK; PBS Masterpiece Theatre 2000.
  - http://www.spring.net/karenr/mdbro/tots.html *Contains synopsis, production details.*
- C. Tim Fywell, dir. 2009.
  - *synopsis, production details.*
- *Starting Point:* After viewing your choice of the two videos, read Dennis Tredy's detailed article (link below). It discusses Dan Curtis's 1974 version in detail, see Part II of the essay. Unfortunately, he only gives a paragraph [45] to the Ben Bolt version and, of course, is silent about the 2009 version.
  - Shadows of Shadows – Techniques of Ambiguity in Three Film Adaptations of "The Turn of the Screw": J. Clayton's The Innocents (1961), D. Curtis's The Turn of the Screw (1974), and A. Aloy's Presence of Mind (1999) [Texte intégral]

Research Essay 3

After consulting two or more good dictionaries of literary terms, such as Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*; Cuddon, J.A. *Dictionary of Literary Terms*; or *A Handbook to Literature*, Holman, Harmon, discuss why *The Turn of the Screw* is a good example of Gothic fiction.

Suggested length: 1,500 words.

Resources for Topic 3:

- The Romantic Period – The Gothic Overview
- http://resources.mhs.vic.edu.au/creating/pages/origins.htm
- Article in open access book: Duperray, Max. "Déjà vu in *The Turn of the Screw*"
- Sample open-access article on Gothic fiction: "Raising Veils and other Bold Acts: The Heroine's Agency in Female Gothic Novels" Kyra Kramer. Pages 23-36.
- The Gothic

Appendix 2: A Mini-Casebook on Brave New World

Overview of Brave New World

- 1980 film version *Brave New World*

  An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://opentextbc.ca/englishliterature/?p=448

  [A reasonably good adaptation of the novel, if rather long. The script was written by Robert E. Thompson, who received an Oscar nomination for his scenario of the film *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*]
- BBC RADIO 45 Minute documentary on *Brave New World*
  [An outstanding discussion of numerous aspects of the novel, with three world experts on 20th-century British literature.]
- [Another podcast from BBC. This one is on modernist utopias]
  Brave New World article Wikipedia
  [An excellent overview of plot, character, and contexts]
- Margaret Atwood's essay on *Brave New World*

History Concentration

- "Brave New World and the Rationalization of Industry". *English Studies in Canada*. Discusses Huxley's satire on communism and capitalism in the novel. [Useful for research focusing on history and/or business.PDF File.]
- "Sight-seeing in Alien Englands" Aldous Huxley (1931) [A companion essay to *BNW*, in which Huxley describes his visits to Alfred Mond's chemical factory in the north of England, Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI), and to the Lucas Electrical Parts factory in Birmingham.
- *My Life and Work* by Henry Ford
- "Dickens' *Hard Times* as Dystopia" [Discusses Charles Dickens's "condition of England" novel *Hard Times* as source for *BNW*.]
- Political figures important to *BNW*.
- *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism* René Fülop-Miller. [Huxley reviewed this anti-communist book shortly before he wrote *BNW*. It is an important source for the satire on communism.]

- “Aldous Huxley’s Bokanovsky” (*Science Fiction Studies*). [A short essay on the source of the name “Bokanovsky.”]
- “‘Brave New World,’ The Feelies, and Elinor Glyn.” [*ELN* 35.2 Sept. 1997.] [Discusses the uses Huxley made of various sources such as Shakespeare’s *Othello* and Elinor Glyn’s novel *It*.]
- “Aldous Huxley’s Americanization of the *Brave New World* Typescript.” [Primarily a historical approach to the novel.]

Psychology Focus

- “Brave New World Revisited Revisited: Huxley’s Evolving View of Behaviorism.” [Valuable discussion of Huxley’s changing attitude to behaviorism in *BNW* and later works. Psychology]
- “Aldous Huxley’s Brave New World as a Parody and Satire of Wells, Ford, Freud and Behaviourism” *AHA 8* [A wide-ranging discussion of Huxley’s satire on the ideas of key figures in psychology.]

Biology Concentration

- Congdon, Brad “Community, Identity, Stability”: The Scientific Society and the Future of Religion in Aldous Huxley’s Brave New World.” [This paper is quite wide-ranging but will be particularly helpful for students wanting to concentrate their research on biological aspects of the novel.]
- J. B. S. Haldane. *Daedalus: or Science and the Future.* [This paper by noted biologist Prof. Haldane, a friend of Huxley’s, discusses concepts such as ectogenesis and others topics central to *BNW*.]
- Julian Huxley. “The Tissue-Culture King.” A science-fiction story by Huxley’s brother, Sir Julian Huxley, written in 1927. It discusses scientific ideas also found in *BNW*.

Anthropology Concentration

- Franklin, Benjamin. “Remarks on the Savages of North America.”
- Zuni Religion [Huxley used some of the Smithsonian reports from Frank Cushing for background source material for BNW.]
- Hough, Walter. *Moki Snake Dance.* [N.B. “Moki” was an early synonym for “Hopi”.]
- Huxley read this pamphlet in 1930 before writing *Brave New World*. Despite his limited time visiting Aboriginal reservations in the U.S. states of Arizona and New Mexico, he was able to gain further background details for the “Savage Reservation” chapters in the novel by using this and other publications as source material. [The Cushing, Hough and the Higdon essays are particularly useful for students wishing to do research with emphasis on Anthropology.]

- David Leon Higdon Essay: Huxley's Hopi Sources
- Los Hermanos Penitentes
- "Brave New World and the Anthropologists: Primitivism in A.F. 632" Jerome Meckier

Philosophy Concentration

- "The Utopian Tradition and Aldous Huxley" *SFS* [As the title suggests, this essay discusses *BNW* within a context of previous utopian works, including Plato's *Republic*.]
- The "Grand Inquisitor Chapter" from Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* [Useful for students wishing to focus on Chapters 16 and 17 in *BNW*, particularly the philosophy of the Grand Inquisitor. Political Science/Philosophy.]
- Fremantle, Ann. Introduction to *The Grand Inquisitor*.
- http://www.dartmouth.edu/~karamazov/resources/?page_id=391
- Lewicki, Greg. "Dostoevsky Extended: Aldous Huxley on the Grand Inquisitor, Specialisation and the Future of Science."
- http://ebookbrowsee.net/gdoc.php?id=181704028&url=c9916ddd0284a3df025e0ce4e036d271 [Culture and Politics, Tischner European Univesity Papers, Issue 2/3, pp 210-33. Use this article together with Wikipedia "Grand Inquisitor" as starting point.]
- Miranda Website [Contains numerous sources for *Brave New World* in downloadable format.]
- "Utopias, Positive and Negative". Aldous Huxley (1963). [pdf]
- Utopias Positive and Negative Afterword [James Sexton]. [pdf]

Appendix 3: A Mini-Casebook on Heart of Darkness

General Guides/Introductions to Conrad's Novella

Heart of Darkness (Peter Cash). An excellent 17-page booklet on the main theme of *HD*. (English Association, Leicester)

A Guide to *Heart of Darkness* (Allen Kromer) from Signet (Penguin) 25 pages.

Bookdrum: *Heart of Darkness* (Gordon Knox). Contains useful background ideas, historical contexts, maps, illustrations, and glossary.

A BBC *In Our Time* podcast on *Heart of Darkness* from 2007 (45 minutes).

Readings for Research Essay Topic 1

Is *Heart of Darkness* a racist work? You should start with a good definition of racism to help structure your essay.

Suggested length: 1,500 words

- Achebe, Chinua. "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness'"
- "Achebe on Racism in Heart of Darkness". Teisch. Victorian Web.
- "'A Bloody Racist': About Achebe's View of Conrad." Cedric Watts
- Postcolonial Criticism of *Heart of Darkness:* A Casebook
- "*Heart of Darkness*": "Anti-Imperialism, Racism, or Impressionism?"Author(s): PATRICK BRANTLINGER. Source: *Criticism*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Fall, 1985), pp. 363-385. Published by: Wayne State University PressStable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/23110450
- Bolacki, S. http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/explore/publications/casestudies/seminars/conrad.php
- Sarvan, C.P. "Racism and the *Heart of Darkness*." *The International Fiction Review,* 7, No. 1 (1980), 6-10. Click on pdf link.

Readings for Research Essay Topic 2

Imperialism in *Heart of Darkness*. Start with a good definition of both imperialism and colonialism.

Suggested length: 1,500 words

- Victorian History British Empire (Victorian Web)
- "Conrad's Critique of Imperialism in *Heart of Darkness*" Hawkins, Hunt. Conrad's Critique of Imperialism in Heart of Darkness. PMLA
Vol. 94, No. 2 (Mar., 1979), pp. 286-299

Published by: Modern Language Association

- "Imperialism: Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*." Raskin, Jonah
- From Said, Edward. Culture and Imperialism (1993).
- "Conrad's Bloody Imperialism: Achebe, Said, and What Conrad Really Wrote." by Zelnick.
- "Critical responses to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*" by Svensson, M.
- "White Lies and Whited Sepulchres in Conrad's Heart of Darkness." by Philip Allingham.
- "Kurtz as a Symbol of Imperialism." Chapter 3 (pp 55-96) Thesis.

Readings for Research Essay Topic 3

The Position of Women in *Heart of Darkness*.
Suggested length: 1,500 words

- "Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and the World of Western Women." Peters. *Studies in Short Fiction*. 37.1 (EBSCO).
- " An Ashy Halo: Woman as Symbol in 'Heart of Darkness'" Geary, Edward A. Studies in Short Fiction, Fall 76, Vol. 13 Issue 4, p. 499, 8p. [EBSCO]
- "The Women Do Not Travel: Gender, Difference, and Incommensurability in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*." McIntire. *MFS* (Project Muse).
- "Reading Race and Gender in Conrad's Dark Continent." London Free JSTOR**.** Criticism. Vol. 31, No. 3 (Summer, 1989), pp. 235-252. Article Stable URL.
- "Revisiting Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: Women, Symbolism and Resistance." Smith. M.A. Thesis.
- Student Essay, "Sexism in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*." by Haydar Ali.

Appendix 4: Glossary of Literary Terms

Adage A traditional or proverbial saying.

Allegory A story in which the characters and events extend beyond the confines of their story to represent an object lesson to readers.

Alliteration The repetition of a consonant sound – "storm strewn sea."

Anapaest The anapaestic meter consists of a series of two unstressed sounds followed by a single stressed sound – "The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold" (Lord Byron).

Antagonist Character whose dramatic role is to oppose the *protagonist* (q.v.).

Archetype Also known as universal symbol, an archetype may be a character (the intrepid hero, damsel in distress, party animal), a theme (the triumph of good over evil), a symbol, or even a setting. Many literary critics are of the opinion that archetypes, which have a common and recurring representation in a particular human culture or entire human race, shape the structure and function of a literary work.

Archetypal plot A sequence of events forming a type of story that has recurred throughout the history of a civilization, and with which most people are familiar; for example, a battle between good and evil.

Assonance The repetition of vowel sounds, as in "rapid rattle" (Wilfred Owen).

Aural Describes how a poem appeals to our sense of sound, hearing.

Ballad A narrative poem, usually written in quatrains with abcb rhyme scheme (q.v.).

Blank verse Unrhymed iambic pentameter (q.v.) poetry.

Blocking agents In drama, characters who try to prevent other characters from achieving their goals.

Catharsis The purging of audience emotion in tragedy, the release of emotion, and final feeling of relief.

Comedy Form of drama characterized by some sense of optimism, fellowship, love, and good humour.

Conceit A metaphor that is unusually ingenious or elaborate. Common feature in work of metaphysical poets, such as John Donne.

Contextual symbol A symbol that has a non-literal meaning only within the context of the work of art in which it is found.

Dactyl The dactylic meter is the opposite of the anaepestic. It consists of a series of single hard-stressed sounds followed by two soft-stressed sounds – "Just for a handful of silver he left us" (Robert Browning).

Deconstruction An interpretive movement in literary theory that reached its apex in the 1970s. Deconstruction rejects absolute interpretations, stressing ambiguities and contradictions in literature. Deconstruction grew out of the linguistic principles of De Saussure who noted that many Indo-European languages create meaning by binary opposites. Verbal oppositions such as good/evil, light/dark, male/female, rise/fall, up/down, and high/low show a human tendency common transculturally to create vocabulary as pairs of opposites, with one of the two words arbitrarily given positive connotations and the other word arbitrarily given negative connotations.

Dramatic monologue A poem which is "dramatic" because it is a speech presented to an audience (usually of only one person) and a "monologue" because no other character does any talking.

Dynamic character Sometimes referred to as a round character, a dynamic character is one whose values, attitudes, and/or ideals change as a result of the experience the character undergoes throughout the story.

Elegy A poem written to commemorate the death of a person who played a significant role in the poet's life.

Epic An epic in its most specific sense is a genre of classical poetry. It is a poem that is a long narrative about a serious subject, told in an elevated style of language, focused on the exploits of a hero or demi-god who represents the cultural values of a race, nation, or religious group, in which the hero's success or failure will determine the fate of that people or nation. Usually, the epic has a vast setting and covers a wide geographic area, it contains superhuman feats of strength or military prowess, and gods or supernatural beings frequently take part in the action. The poem begins with the invocation of a muse to inspire the poet and, the narrative starts *in medias res*. The epic contains long catalogues of heroes or important characters, focusing on highborn kings and great warriors rather than peasants and commoners.

Epiphany A change, sudden insight or awareness revealed to the main character.

Eye rhyme Words that look as if they should rhyme but do not – for example "good" and "mood." Also known as sight rhyme.

Fable A short and traditional story, involving archetypal characters and ending with a moral.

Feminism and literature Feminist critics aim to examine the relationships between the male and female characters and the distribution of power within those relationships.

Fiction Prose text in the form of a story that is primarily a product of human imagination.

First-person major-character narrator This type of narrator tells a story in which he or she is the main character, or main focus of attention.

First-person minor-character narrator This narrator is typically a gossip. He or she observes the actions of another person, often a friend, and then tells what that friend did, when, and to whom.

Flashback The technique of narrating an event that occurred before the point in the story to which the narrator has advanced.

Flat character A character, also known as a static character, who is offered the chance for positive change but who, for one reason or another, fails to embrace it.

Free verse Poetry without a set rhyme scheme or rhythm pattern.

Full rhyme The use of words that rhyme completely, such as "good" and "wood."

Genre A major literary form, such as drama, poetry, and the novel.

Haiku The Japanese haiku is a brief poem, consisting of a single image. The haiku consists of three lines of five, seven, and five syllables, respectively.

Half rhyme Describes words that almost rhyme such as "time" and "mine."

Hamartia A term from Greek tragedy that literally means "missing the mark." Originally applied to an archer who misses the target, a *hamartia* came to signify a tragic flaw, especially a misperception, a lack of some important insight, or some blindness that ironically results from one's own strengths and abilities.

Horatian satire Named after the Roman poet, Horace, this is a fairly gentle type of satire used to poke fun at people and their failings or foibles.

Hyperbole A metaphor that bases its comparison on the use of exaggeration, for example, "I'd walk a million miles for one of your smiles" (Al Jolson).

Iambic The iambic rhythm pattern in poetry consists of one unstressed sound or beat, followed by one stressed sound or beat – "The cúrfew tólls the knéll of párting dáy" (Thomas Gray).

Iambic diameter A line with two beats – "I can't."

Iambic pentameter A line with five beats – "I have been one acquainted with the night" (Robert Frost).

Iambic tetrameter A line with four beats – "I wandered lonely as a cloud" (William Wordsworth).

Iambic trimeter A line with three beats – "The only news I know/Is bulletins all day" (Emily Dickinson).

Imagery In literature, an image is a word picture. It can be a phrase, a sentence, or a line. It is used to enhance the reader's appreciation of the figurative more than the literal meaning of a poem, story, or play – "The fog comes/on little cat feet" (Carl Sandberg).

Imagists A group of poets whose aim between 1912 and 1917 was to write poetry that accented imagery (q.v.) or, their preferred term, "imagism" to communicate meaning.

In media res Latin for "in the middle of the action," the point at which an epic, such as "The Odyssey," typically opens.

Irony Cicero referred to irony as "saying one thing and meaning another." Irony comes in many forms. **Verbal irony** is a trope in which a speaker makes a statement in which its actual meaning differs sharply from the meaning that the words ostensibly express. **Dramatic irony** involves a situation in a narrative in which the reader knows something about present or future circumstances that the character does not know. In that situation, the character acts in a way we recognize to be grossly inappropriate to the actual circumstances, or the character expects the opposite of what the reader knows that fate holds in store, or the character anticipates a particular outcome that unfolds itself in an unintentional way. Probably the most famous example of dramatic irony is the situation facing Oedipus in the play *Oedipus Rex*. **Situational irony** is a trope in which accidental events occur that seem oddly appropriate, such as the poetic justice of a pickpocket getting his own pocket picked.

Juvenalian satire Named after the Roman poet Juvenal, this form of satire uses bitter sarcasm more than humour, and is often tinged with cruelty.

Limited omniscient narrator A narrator who limits himself or herself to relaying to readers the thoughts and actions of the main character only.

Litotes The deliberate use of understatement, usually to create an ironic or satiric effect – "I am not as young as I used to be."

Malapropism A blunder in diction, grotesquely substituting one word with a similar sound for the proper word. Mrs. Malaprop, (Fr. *Mal à propos*), a character in R. B. Sheridan's comedy *The Rivals*, was famously guilty of such errors in diction: e.g., "As headstrong as an *allegory* [alligator] on the banks of the Nile"; Shakespeare's Mistress Quickly in *2 Henry IV* (Falstaff "is *indicted* to dinner"); and Capt. Jack Boyle in O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* ("The whole world's in a state of *chassis*" [chaos]) are earlier and later characters given to malapropisms.

Marxist literary theory Like feminist critics, Marxist critics examine the imbalance of power relationships among characters in literature, in terms of social class.

Metaphor A comparison intended to clarify or intensify the more complex of the objects of the comparison.

Metonymy A form of metaphor in which a phrase is understood to represent something more; for example, to use the phrase "sabre rattling" to mean "threatening war."

Meter A term used to describe the rhythm and measure of a line of poetry.

Narrative The storyline in a literary work.

Narrator Storyteller.

Non-sequential plot One in which the author holds back an important incident that occurred before the chronological ending of the story, typically to create suspense.

Novel A narrative work of fiction typically involving a range of characters and settings, linked together through plot and sub-plots.

Novella A short work of fiction that falls in length somewhere between the novel and the short story.

Objective narrator The objective narrator establishes setting in a precise but rather detached style, and then lets the conversation tell the story, using an objective point of view.

Octave An eight-line stanza.

Ode A long formal poem that typically presents a poet's philosophical views about such subjects as nature, art, death, and human emotion.

Omniscient narrator A narrator capable of telling readers the thoughts of all the characters and the actions of all the characters at any time. An omniscient narrator is like a god who can provide readers with all the information they could ever want.

Onomatopoeia A word or phrase usually found in a poem the sound of which suggests its meaning – "bang," "thwack."

Oral Describes a spoken as opposed to written literary tradition.

Paradox A phrase which seems self-contradictory but, in fact, makes powerful sense despite its lack of logic – "I must be cruel only to be kind" (Shakespeare).

Pastoral Relating to the countryside, especially in an idealized form.

Pastoral elegy A form of elegy that typically contrasts the serenity of the simple life of a shepherd with the cruel world which hastened the death of the poet's friend.

Personification A form of metaphor that compares something non-human with something that is human – "Two Sunflowers/Move in the Yellow Room" (William Blake).

Petrarchan sonnet A sonnet with a rhyme scheme: abbaabbacdecde.

Plot In a literary fiction work, "plot" refers to the events, the order in which they occur, and the relationship of the events to each other.

Poetry One of the major literary genres, usually written in a series of discrete lines which highlight the artistic use of language.

Point of view The stance from which the storyteller or narrator tells the story.

Prose The written text of fiction and non-fiction, as distinct from poetry.

Protagonist The main character in a literary work. See also *antagonist*.

Quatrain A four-line stanza.

Reader response theory A theory of literature that asserts that the reader creates meaning and that, because all people are different, all readings will be different.

Regular verse A literary work written in lines that have the same rhythm pattern and a regular rhyme scheme.

Rhyme scheme The rhyming pattern of a regular-verse poem.

Rhyming couplet A two-line stanza in which the last words in each line rhyme.

Satire A literary form in which a writer pokes fun at those aspects of his society, especially those people and those social institutions that the author thinks are corrupt and in need of change.

Scapegoat A person who is banished or sacrificed in the interests of his or her community. The term is often applied to a tragic hero.

Sequential plot One in which the events are narrated in the order in which they occurred in time.

Sestet A six-line stanza.

Shakespearean sonnet A sonnet with a rhyme scheme: ababcdcdefefgg.

Short story A prose fiction narrative that usually occurs in a single setting and concerns a single main character.

Sight rhyme Words that look as if they should rhyme but do not – for example "mood" and "good." Also known as eye rhyme.

Simile A type of metaphor that makes the comparison explicit by using either the word "like" or

the word “as” – “Elderly American ladies leaning on their canes listed toward me like towers of Pisa” (Nabokov).

Sonnet A 14-line regular-verse poem, usually written in iambic pentameter.

Spondee A double-hard-stressed phrase such as “shook foil” (Gerard Manley Hopkins, “God’s Grandeur”).

Static character A static character, also known as a flat character, is one who is offered the chance for positive change but who, for one reason or another, fails to embrace it.

Stereotype A recognizable *type* of person rather than a fully developed character. A stereotypical character is one who can be identified by a single dominant trait; for example, the braggart soldier, the country bumpkin.

Symbolism The use within a literary work of an element that has more than a literal meaning – “All the world’s a stage” (Shakespeare).

Synecdoche The use of a part to represent a whole, as in the expression “lend me a hand.”

Tercet A three-line stanza.

Theatre of the absurd A phrase used to describe a group of plays written during and after the 1950s. The term “absurd” is used because the plots and the characters (though not the themes) are unconventional when examined in the context of conventional tragedy and comedy.

Theme The message or insight into human experience that an author offers to his or her readers. Broad themes might include family, love, war, nature, death, faith, time, or some aspects of these.

Tone The attitude or personality that a literary work projects; for example, serious and solemn, or lighthearted and amusing.

Tragedy A play that tells the story of a significant event or series of events in the life of a significant person.

Tragic hero The main character in a Greek or Roman tragedy. In contrast with the **epic hero** (who embodies the values of his culture and appears in an epic poem), the tragic hero is typically an admirable character who appears as the focus in a tragic play, but one who is undone by a *hamartia*—a tragic mistake, misconception, or flaw. That hamartia leads to the downfall of the main character.

Trochaic The opposite of iambic. The rhythm of the lines of a trochaic poem consist not of a series of soft-stressed-hard-stressed sounds, but a series of hard-stressed-soft-stressed sounds – “There they are my fifty men and women” (Robert Browning).

Valediction Bidding farewell to someone or something.

Verse A unit of a varying number of lines with which a poem is divided. Also called a stanza.

Villanelle A 19-line poem divided into five tercets and one quatrain. Probably the most famous English villanelle is Dylan Thomas’s “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night.”

Appendix 5: Writing an Analysis of a Poem, Story, or Play

If you are taking a literature course, it is important that you know how to write an analysis—sometimes called an interpretation or a literary analysis or a critical reading or a critical analysis—of a story, a poem, and a play. Your instructor will probably assign such an analysis as part of the course assessment. On your mid-term or final exam, you might have to write an analysis of one or more of the poems and/or stories on your reading list. Or the dreaded "sight poem or story" might appear on an exam, a work that is not on the reading list, that you have not read before, but one your instructor includes on the exam to examine your ability to apply the active reading skills you have learned in class to produce, independently, an effective literary analysis.You might be asked to write instead or, or in addition to an analysis of a literary work, a more sophisticated essay in which you compare and contrast the protagonists of two stories, or the use of form and metaphor in two poems, or the tragic heroes in two plays.

You might learn some literary theory in your course and be asked to apply theory—feminist, Marxist, reader-response, psychoanalytic, new historicist, for example—to one or more of the works on your reading list. But the seminal assignment in a literature course is the analysis of the single poem, story, novel, or play, and, even if you do not have to complete this assignment specifically, it will form the basis of most of the other writing assignments you will be required to undertake in your literature class. There are several ways of structuring a literary analysis, and your instructor might issue specific instructions on how he or she wants this assignment done. The method presented here might not be identical to the one your instructor wants you to follow, but it will be easy enough to modify, if your instructor expects something a bit different, and it is a good default method, if your instructor does not issue more specific guidelines.You want to begin your analysis with a paragraph that provides the context of the work you are analyzing and a brief account of what you believe to be the poem or story or play's main theme. At a minimum, your account of the work's context will include the name of the author, the title of the work, its genre, and the date and place of publication. If there is an important biographical or historical context to the work, you should include that, as well.Try to express the work's theme in one or two sentences. Theme, you will recall, is that insight into human experience the author offers to readers, usually revealed as the content, the drama, the plot of the poem, story, or play unfolds and the characters interact. Assessing theme can be a complex task. Authors usually show the theme; they don't tell it. They rarely say, at the end of the story, words to this effect: "and the moral of my story is…" They tell their story, develop their characters, provide some kind of conflict—and from all of this theme emerges. Because identifying theme can be challenging and subjective, it is often a good idea to work through the rest of the analysis, then return to the beginning and assess theme in light of your analysis of the work's other literary elements.Here is a good example of an introductory paragraph from Ben's analysis of William Butler Yeats' poem, "Among School Children."

> "Among School Children" was published in Yeats' 1928 collection of poems *The Tower*. It was inspired by a visit Yeats made in 1926 to school in Waterford, an official visit in his capacity as a senator of the Irish Free State. In the course of the tour, Yeats reflects upon his own youth and the experiences that shaped the "sixty-year old, smiling public man" (line 8) he has become. Through his reflection, the theme of the poem emerges: a life has meaning when connections among apparently disparate experiences are forged into a unified whole.

In the body of your literature analysis, you want to guide your readers through a tour of the poem,

story, or play, pausing along the way to comment on, analyze, interpret, and explain key incidents, descriptions, dialogue, symbols, the writer's use of figurative language—any of the elements of literature that are relevant to a sound analysis of this particular work. Your main goal is to explain how the elements of literature work to elucidate, augment, and develop the theme. The elements of literature are common across genres: a story, a narrative poem, and a play all have a plot and characters. But certain genres privilege certain literary elements. In a poem, for example, form, imagery and metaphor might be especially important; in a story, setting and point-of-view might be more important than they are in a poem; in a play, dialogue, stage directions, lighting serve functions rarely relevant in the analysis of a story or poem.

The length of the body of an analysis of a literary work will usually depend upon the length of work being analyzed—the longer the work, the longer the analysis—though your instructor will likely establish a word limit for this assignment. Make certain that you do not simply paraphrase the plot of the story or play or the content of the poem. This is a common weakness in student literary analyses, especially when the analysis is of a poem or a play.

Here is a good example of two body paragraphs from Amelia's analysis of "Araby" by James Joyce.

> Within the story's first few paragraphs occur several religious references which will accumulate as the story progresses. The narrator is a student at the Christian Brothers' School; the former tenant of his house was a priest; he left behind books called *The Abbot* and *The Devout Communicant*. Near the end of the story's second paragraph the narrator describes a "central apple tree" in the garden, under which is "the late tenant's rusty bicycle pump." We may begin to suspect the tree symbolizes the apple tree in the Garden of Eden and the bicycle pump, the snake which corrupted Eve, a stretch, perhaps, until Joyce's fall-of-innocence theme becomes more apparent.
>
> …..
>
> The narrator must continue to help his aunt with her errands, but, even when he is so occupied, his mind is on Mangan's sister, as he tries to sort out his feelings for her. Here Joyce provides vivid insight into the mind of an adolescent boy at once elated and bewildered by his first crush. He wants to tell her of his "confused adoration," but he does not know if he will ever have the chance. Joyce's description of the pleasant tension consuming the narrator is conveyed in a striking simile, which continues to develop the narrator's character, while echoing the religious imagery, so important to the story's theme: "But my body was like a harp, and her words and gestures were like fingers, running along the wires."

The concluding paragraph of your analysis should realize two goals. First, it should present your own opinion on the quality of the poem or story or play about which you have been writing. And, second, it should comment on the current relevance of the work. You should certainly comment on the enduring social relevance of the work you are explicating. You may comment, though you should never be obliged to do so, on the personal relevance of the work. Here is the concluding paragraph from Dao-Ming's analysis of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

> First performed in 1895, *The Importance of Being Earnest* has been made into a film, as recently as 2002 and is regularly revived by professional and amateur theatre companies. It endures not only because of the comic brilliance of its characters and their dialogue, but also because its satire still resonates with contemporary audiences. I am still amazed that I see in my own Asian mother a shadow of Lady Bracknell, with her obsession with finding for her daughter a husband who will maintain, if not, ideally, increase the family's social status. We might like to think we are more liberated and socially sophisticated than our Victorian ancestors, but the starlets and eligible bachelors who star in current reality television programs illustrate the extent to which superficial concerns still influence decisions about love and even marriage. Even now,

we can turn to Oscar Wilde to help us understand and laugh at those who are earnest in name only.

Dao-Ming's conclusion is brief, but she does manage to praise the play, reaffirm its main theme, and explain its enduring appeal. And note how her last sentence cleverly establishes that sense of closure that is also a feature of an effective analysis.

You may, of course, modify the template that is presented here. Your instructor might favour a somewhat different approach to literary analysis. Its essence, though, will be your understanding and interpretation of the theme of the poem, story, or play and the skill with which the author shapes the elements of literature—plot, character, form, diction, setting, point of view—to support the theme.

[A Model Analysis]

Now read the short poem by Siegfried Sassoon, "Base Details," reprinted in Project Bartleby, and then read the sample essay with comments:

Let's have a look at Sassoon's poem of World War I: "Base Details".

First let's try to determine who is the speaker, the "I" of the poem. Notice that the speaker speculates: "If I were fierce, and bald, and short of breath…" Might we assume he is none of the three adjectives? So how old would he be? Start with a hypothesis and stick with it unless further details make your guess seem untenable. Then try a different hypothesis. For now let's assume that the speaker is young. What is his rank? Is he an officer? Unlikely, probably an unlisted man, since his tone toward the majors is angry and sarcastic.

He calls them "scarlet." What is the denotation of "scarlet"? What are some connotations of "scarlet"? What does "petulant" mean? Why are the faces of the majors described as "puffy"? What is the main meaning here of "scrap"? Are other meanings intended?

What is the purpose of the poem? Look up the brief biographical details for Sassoon on the online "Oxford World War I Poets" website.

After reading the poem three times (you should print a copy of the poem from Project Bartleby), have a look at the following student essay on diction in "Base Details."

The Diction of "Base Details" (Student Essay adapted from Edward J. Gordon, *Writing About Imaginative Literature*, Harbrace: 1973).

Old men make and run wars; young men fight and die in them. In "Base Details," Siegfried Sassoon reveals through his diction a bitterness toward the fact that young men die in wars while the officers live safely behind the lines. The speaker in the poem is an ordinary soldier talking about the majors at the army base. By pretending what he would be like if he were an officer, he condemns war.

Through his choice of words, the soldier expresses an attitude of contempt for the officers behind the lines who "speed glum heroes up the line to death." He speaks with sarcasm of their fierceness and goes on to describe them as "bald, and short of breath." If he were a major, he, too, would have a "puffy petulant face,/Guzzling and gulping in the best hotel." The connotations of these words suggest men who are overweight and out of shape from drinking and eating too much. The reference to "scarlet Majors" recalls the red dress uniforms of British officers and the colour of blood.

[Coherence would be even better here if the student could perhaps go on to point out explicitly how the majors figuratively have blood on their hands—the blood of the young soldiers under their command. One brief sentence would do. JS]

The speaker then goes on to describe the attitude toward soldiers that is held by the officers. One speaks of losing many men in "this last scrap." The understatement of that last word contrasts sharply with the mention in the same line of a heavy loss in battle. **[Here the student should state the other meanings of "scrap" and point out their thematic significance. JS]** In the last two lines of the poem, a further contrast is set up between "youth stone dead" and the officer who will "toddle safely home and

die—in bed." **[Here the student could improve the essay by discussing the connotations of the verb "toddle" and then relating the diction to theme. JS]**

When the entire poem is read, the title becomes ambiguous. The apparent meaning refers to the details of a military base. But "base" can also mean low and contemptible. "Detail" also has two meanings. It can mean a detachment of men sent out on a particular mission—"speed glum heroes up the line"—but it can also mean a minor matter, as if sending people off to die is not important to the officers. So the apparent meaning that we see as we begin reading turns into a second meaning when we finish reading the poem.

The diction, then, makes a comment on the theme of the poem: old men who direct wars at a safe distance behind the lines seem to have little understanding of what it means to die in battle and appear on "the Roll of Honor."

Appendix 6: Documenting Essays in MLA Style

The Modern Language Association (MLA) began recommending the use of in-text parenthetical citations in 1984, with the second edition of the *MLA Handbook*. Before then, source citations were placed in footnotes and the final, alphabetical list of sources was attached at the end of the paper under the heading, "Bibliography." The term "Works Cited" has since replaced "Bibliography." The entries in a typical Works Cited document cover not only traditional print sources, but–reflecting the widespread scholarly use of technology–also cover Web and related sources.

Listed below is a series of html tutorials on all aspects of MLA documentation with exercises and answers. Students preparing a research essay will find every kind of citation example in this comprehensive series of online tutorials. N.B.: Remember to click on the arrows rather than the words as the various headings appear.

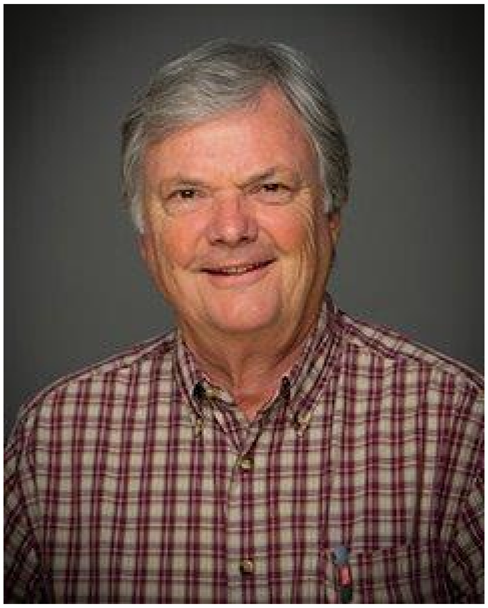
MLA Tutorial from Hunter College

Further online help on MLA documentation.

MLA Formatting and Style Guide from Purdue University

A video from the Purdue Online writing Lab (OWL) on using MLA format for research, with useful page set-up information in addition to practical help on most MLA kinds of citation.

About the Author



James Sexton (Ph.D., Victoria) specializes in Modern, Renaissance, and Utopian/Dystopian literatures, and has published a number of scholarly books and articles, mainly on Aldous Huxley and his circle. He is an elected curator of the Centre for Aldous Huxley Studies (CAHS), University of Münster, and contributing editor, Aldous Huxley Annual. A lecturer in the English Department, Camosun College, Victoria, and Adjunct Professor and SSHRC Research Fellow (2003-2013) at the University of Victoria, Jim also enjoys teaching English language and literature to advanced English students internationally. From 2002 to 2005, he was a visiting maître de conférences at l'Université de Toulon-Var. He now focuses on online teaching and on developing open educational resources in English literature.

Versioning History

This page provides a record of edits and changes made to this book since its initial publication. Whenever edits or updates are made in the text, we provide a record and description of those changes here. If the change is minor, the version number increases by 0.01. If the edits involve substantial updates, the version number increases to the next full number.

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Version	Date	Change	Details
1.01	October 7, 2014	Book added to the B.C. Open Textbook collection	
1.02	November 22, 2017	Additional content added.	Juno and the Paycock play added to the section on Sean O'Casey.
1.03	June 6, 2019	Updated the book's theme.	The styles of this book have been updated, which may affect the page numbers of the PDF and print copy.
2.01	July 8, 2019	Entire book revised for accessibility.	Accessibility remediation: • Link text edited to be descriptive. • Headings added. • Added List of Links by Part for Print Users • Added an Accessibility Statement Removed the following broken links: • V. Charles Dickens ◦ http://www.bl.uk/britishlibrary/~/media/bl/global/english-online/teachers/pdf/teachers-dickens-a-christmas-carol-poverty.pdf • XIV. A.E Housman ◦ http://www.canada.com/story.html?id=cb1850c3-0c0d-49ab-bc0d-cefc55383874
2.02	July 30, 2019	The following changes were part of a project to standardize BCcampus-published books.	• Added additional publication information • Updated copyright and attribution information • Added ISBNs • Renamed "About the book" to "About BCcampus Open Education" and updated the content. • Updated the cover image.
2.03	August 6, 2019	Replaced copyrighted content.	Copyrighted Henry James biography from American Passages was replaced by CC licensed biography from Modernist Commons.
2.04	August 13, 2021	Fixed sections not showing up in exports/	Added Juno and the Paycock play to exported files (before it was only displaying in the webbook).

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I. The Victorian Era 1832–1901

- Archaeology and Imperialism: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003k9gt
- British Empire: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/empire/
- Child Labor: http://www.victorianweb.org/victorian/history/1851/index.html
- Dover Beach: http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/arnold/writings/doverbeach.html
- Gender Ideology & Separate Spheres: http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/g/gender-ideology-and-separate-spheres-19th-century/
- Gender Matters: http://www.victorianweb.org/gender/
- Great Exhibition: http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/victorians/exhibition/greatexhibition.html

- Industrialism: https://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/victorian/topic_1/welcome.htm
- Kipling's Imperialism: http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/kipling/rkimperialism.html
- Norton Topics: "Victorian Imperialism": https://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/victorian/topic_4/welcome.htm
- Saylor.org English 410 Resources Page: http://www.saylor.org/courses/engl410/?ismissing=0&resourcetype=1
- Social Darwinism: http://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Social_Darwinism
- Suffragists: http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/21cc/struggle/struggle.html
- The British Empire: http://www.victorianweb.org/history/empire/Empire.html
- The Crystal Palace, or The Great Exhibition of 1851: An Overview": http://www.victorianweb.org/victorian/history/1851/index.html
- The Life of the Industrial Worker in Nineteenth-Century England: http://www.victorianweb.org/history/workers2.html
- The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies: http://www.victorianweb.org/gender/wojtczak/nuwss.html
- The Nature of Women: https://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/victorian/topic_2/nature.htm
- 'The Personal is Political': Gender in Private & Public Life: http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/p/the-personal-is-political-gender-in-private-and-public-life/
- The Reform Acts: http://www.victorianweb.org/history/hist2.html
- The Woman Question: https://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/victorian/topic_2/welcome.htm
- The 1833 Reform Act: http://www.victorianweb.org/history/factact.html
- The 1870 Education Act: http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/school/overview/1870educationact/
- Uberindustrialism: http://ubervictorianindustrialism.tumblr.com/
- "Victorian Britain: A Divided Nation?": http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/victorianbritain/divided/
- Victorian Geology: http://www.victorianweb.org/science/geology.htm
- Victorian Science & Religion.: http://www.victorianweb.org/science/science&religion.html
- Victorian Technology: http://www.victorianweb.org/technology/index.html
- 1832 Reform Act: http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/takingliberties/staritems/111832reformact.html

II. Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806–1861)

- Academy of American Poets: http://www.poets.org.
- Amoretti: http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~rbear/amoretti.html#1
- Astrophil and Stella: http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~rbear/stella.html
- Shakespeare Sonnet 1: http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/views/sonnets/sonnet_view.php?Sonnet=1
- Study Questions for "Cry of the Children" and "The Runaway Slave": http://myweb.uiowa.edu/fsboos/questions/ebbrunawayweb.htm
- Testimony Gathered by Ashley's Mines Commission: http://www.victorianweb.org/history/ashley.html
- The Chimney Sweeper: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Chimney_Sweeper

III. Robert Browning (1812–1889)

- About the poems of Robert Browning: http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/poetryperformance/browning/josephinehart/aboutbrowning.html
- Browning's Porphyria's Lover: https://archive.is/20121130020324/http://www.cswnet.com/~erin/rb6.htm
- The Canonization: http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/donne/canonization.php
- The Flea: http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/donne/flea.php

IV. Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892)

- *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir,* I, 305: https://archive.org/stream/alfredlordtennys01tennuoft#page/300/mode/2up.
- A Key to Lord Tennyson's 'In Memoriam' by Alfred Gatty: http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/36637
- BBC Radio In Our Time "In Memoriam": http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0124pnq
- BBC Radio In Our Time "Charge of the Light Brigade" http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b008md8x
- Florence Boos' notes on *In Memoriam*: http://www.uiowa.edu/~boosf/questions/tennyinmem.htm
- In Memoriam: https://archive.org/details/inmemoriambyalfr00tennuoft
- Musical Adaption of "The Lady of Shalott" by Loreena McKennitt: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80-kp6RDl94
- Numerous articles from Victorian Web on In Memoriam: http://www.victorianweb.org/

authors/tennyson/im/lq.html

- Princess Ida – from Tennyson to Gilbert: http://archive.is/ZgnpR
- The Defense of Lucknow: http://www.bartleby.com/297/629.html
- The Lady of Shalott (1833 & 1842 Versions): http://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/tennyson-shalott-comparison
- The Man Behind the Lady: http://www.nines.org/exhibits/The_Man_Behind_The_Lady_?page=1
- The Times/1854/News/The Charge of the Light Brigade: https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Times/1854/News/The_Charge_of_the_Light_Brigade

V. Charles Dickens (1812–1870)

- A Walk in a Workhouse: http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/poorlaw.html
- Biography written by Gregor Brdnik: http://www.dickens-online.info/charles-dickens-biography.htm
- Dickens in Context: http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/dickens/dickenshome.html
- Film Adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*: http://charlesdickenspage.com/dickens_on_film.html#carol
- George Landow's article on Sabbatarianism: http://www.victorianweb.org/religion/sabbatarianism.html
- The origins of A Christmas Carol
- The Story of the Goblin Who Stole a Sexton: http://www.gutenberg.org/files/580/580-h/580-h.htm#link2HCH0029
- "The Story of the Goblin Who Stole a Sexton" audio adaption: http://hwcdn.libsyn.com/p/2/4/4/244de6d298a9930c/Episode_42_-_Christmas_bonus_-_The_goblins_who_stole_a_sexton.mp3?c_id=8096089&expiration=1423608543&hwt=e764686b69626625867eed7a866589cd

VI. Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)

- "Adulterations Detected": Food and Fraud in Christina Rossetti's Goblin Market. By: Rebecca F. Stern: http://www.18thconnect.org/exhibits/Rebecca_Stern_Adulterations
- BBC "In Our Time" podcast on Christina Rossetti: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b017mvwy
- In the Bleak Mid-Winter: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRobryliBLQ
- Katja Brandt's 2006 Ph.D dissertation: http://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/4103/TMP.objres.67.pdf?sequence
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Back Matter

Appendix 1: A Mini-Casebook on The Turn of the Screw

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- "Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and the World of Western Women" by John Peters: http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=b1ceab0a-4c65-420e-88b3-56e39d9352a9%40sessionmgr4008&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#AN=77324367&db=aph
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Appendix 4: Glossary of Literary Terms

- “Epic hero” literary term definition: http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_E.html
- “Genre” literary term definition: http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_G.html
- “in medias res” literary term definition: http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_I.html
- The Indo-European Family of Languages: http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/IE_Main.html
- “Theme” Literary Devices definition: https://literarydevices.net/theme/
- “Tropes” literary term definition: http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/tropes.html

Appendix 5: Writing an Analysis of a Poem, Story, or Play

- Base Detail by Siegfried Sassoon: http://www.bartleby.com/136/11.html
- “Oxford World War I Poets” on Sassoon: https://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/education/tutorials/intro/sassoon

Appendix 6: Documenting Essays in MLA Style

- MLA Formatting and Style Guide from Purdue University: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/
- MLA Tutorial from Hunter College: http://library.hunter.cuny.edu/tutorials/mla/mla_tutorial.html
- Purdue OWL: MLA Formatting – The Basics: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24Y31UrG2q4&list=PL4917D9E21FA6EDFF

Versioning History

- Report an Open Textbook Error: https://open.bccampus.ca/reporting-an-open-textbook-error/